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AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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No 44  
Autumn (April-June) 1992  
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# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

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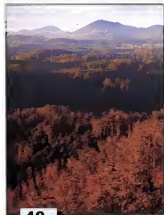
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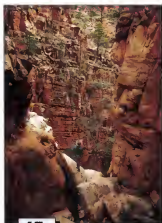
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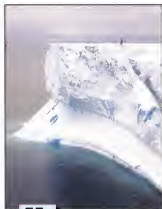
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Cover Between the clouds: Nic Woolford, left, and Sue Baxter on Mt Luxmore, Kepler Track, Fiordland, New Zealand. Chris Baxter



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## THE DARK AGES

Australian wilderness preservation no cause for pride

**R**ecent visits to wild areas, including those in National Parks, in the UK and New Zealand reminded me just how backward we are in much of Australia in preserving our wild places, even in National Parks.

The cliché of endless Australian wilderness stretching to the horizon has suited our popular macho and pioneering self-image well. By contrast, we like to regard the UK as over-civilized, having little remaining natural beauty; and even that we tend to think of without the protection of tree cover, as having been trampled to death by the feet of ages.

The truth is somewhat different. Certainly the UK is relatively small and heavily populated. But there are still important areas of staggering natural beauty, often amazingly close to some of the most crowded centres. The Lake District, the Peak District—and even North Wales—are excellent examples. Furthermore, as a regular visitor to these regions for more than 20 years, I have been struck by the way in which their wilderness quality has been maintained despite increased usage by walkers and climbers.

Whilst New Zealand is famous for its natural beauty, and is very different from the UK, as we tend patronizingly to dismiss it as simply a vast sheep run. However, during a visit last summer I was reminded that New Zealand established the world's second National Park (after Yellowstone in the USA) and has an outstanding collection of magnificently preserved National Parks and other areas of wild beauty. And, despite enormous increases in pressures on some parts from walkers and others pursuing wilderness recreation in recent years, they are standing up to it extremely well. Certainly, New Zealand allows questionable activities such as jet-boating, shooting and fishing in its National Parks, as does Australia (deer hunting, for example, is permitted in certain Australian National Parks), but these have minimal impact by comparison with the rampant commercial development, logging and off-road vehicle use permitted in many Australian National Parks.

Generally speaking, our own situation gives less cause for optimism. To take New South Wales as an example (although its record is by no means worse than that of my own State, Victoria): the Colong Foundation's *Wilderness 1991 Red Index* identifies 26 wilderness areas in NSW. In all but two cases, the *Red Index* claims, these areas are currently being damaged by one or more of the following: logging, over-burning, off-road vehicles and horse-riding, power lines/dams/mining, pollution, and weeds and/or feral animals. In only three areas is management described as satisfactory. Sad to say, this picture is repeated throughout Australia. (In January, UK academic Paul Erlich pointed out on ABC Radio that the area of land being cleared in



Smile! Chris hands Wild's donation of \$5000 to the Wilderness Society's Director Karenne Jurd at a recent meeting in Melbourne. Michael Fogarty

Australia every year is the same now as it was 30 years ago!

I thought about possible causes for such striking differences between the state of wilderness in Australia and that in the UK and in New Zealand, and I concluded that it comes down to a difference of attitude between 'us' (inhabitants of a vast continent) and 'them' (inhabitants of relatively tiny islands). Many of us in Australia still labour under the pioneering misconception that our land is infinitely vast—to be exploited and conquered, even feared. If it can't be cut down or dug up, it's of no value. The idea of wilderness for its own sake is only for 'greenie extremists' and 'guilt-ridden yuppies'. In the UK and New Zealand, on the other hand, the intrinsic value of places of natural beauty has been widely recognized for some time. Many were set aside early on in generously sized National Parks, which have been fiercely defended since and remain largely inviolate from the worst pressures of commercialism. The defenders of natural beauty in the UK and New Zealand are as entrenched, varied and effective as they often are shallowly rooted, polarized and ineffectual in this country. There are bodies in the UK and New Zealand that are of major importance in the setting aside, and protection, of areas of natural

beauty for posterity. In Australia the National Trust has done comparatively little for the preservation of the natural environment, particularly of wilderness. (The work of the Victorian Conservation Trust in Australian natural-area protection should not be forgotten, but it is on a relatively small scale.) In the UK it is a very different story. There, the National Trust has some two million members and has systematically bought up hundreds of thousands of hectares of the most spectacularly beautiful natural areas including the mountains of Snowdonia, a quarter of the Lake District and much of the Derbyshire Peak District. In addition, the Trust has spent millions of pounds acquiring some 1200 kilometres of unspoiled British coastline. The land owned by the Trust is at least as freely accessible to the public as Australian wilderness areas on public land. The role of naturalist organizations in the conservation process has also been important both in the UK and in New Zealand.

In both these countries it is generally recognized that National Parks and other reserves must be vigorously defended and properly managed at all times. And people there have been quick to realize the enormous economic and other benefits which flow from a far-sighted attitude to wilderness. First the UK and, more recently, New Zealand began to derive great commercial benefit from the steady flow of overseas visitors attracted by their natural beauty. On the other hand, we are





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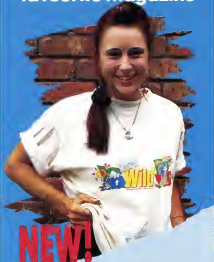
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quickly ruining many of our natural areas by allowing logging, recreational vehicle use, mining and other destructive practices that would be rejected out of hand in National Parks in the UK and New Zealand. In well managed parks 'people pressure' is not a problem—at least, not when compared with the effects of, say, logging. Our better-preserved National Parks, such as Mt Buffalo and Wilsons Promontory, both in Victoria, are so preserved largely because logging, mining and off-road driving have not been allowed within their boundaries.

We congratulate ourselves on our 'progress' whilst ridiculing the 'Poms' and 'Kiwis'. At least we'll always have *their* wild places to walk in and enjoy.

## A practical response

Our desire that any concern for the deteriorating global environment be followed by action was strongly stated in the Editorial of the last issue of *Wild*. To reinforce that message, we announced that we had made donations of \$5000 each to the aid and development organization World Vision and to the Wilderness Society. We also said that readers could look forward to information on just how the donation to World Vision was helping a rural, reforestation-based development programme.

I'm pleased to announce that since then we have selected such a programme. Our choice, World Vision's Saatusa agro-forestry project, lies in the rugged Western Abaya region in southern Ethiopia. Almost 480 kilometres south of the capital Addis Ababa, it includes rugged mountain ranges, undulating plateaux and savanna and desert lowlands.

One-fifth of Ethiopia is mountainous with elevations above 3000 metres, and these areas support 88 per cent of the total population of more than 50 million people.

It's a strange paradox that Ethiopia has some of the most beautiful terrain on earth yet has suffered incredibly from environmental and human degradation. Relatively productive at the turn of the century, this poorest of African countries sustained a generous 40 per cent forest cover. Today, the figure has been slashed to a mere four per cent—and is still declining.

The consequences include distorted weather patterns producing recurring severe droughts, and chronic erosion. It is estimated that 1.6 billion tonnes of topsoil wash away annually, representing enough arable land to support 12 000 families. This environmental disaster was a major factor in Ethiopia's Great Famine of 1984, when eight million people faced starvation and more than one million died. In developing countries the effects of misuse of the environment are more immediate than elsewhere, and certainly more devastating.

Nevertheless, if the results of previous projects similar to the one at Saatusa are any indication, there is hope. World Vision aims to replicate its programmes in the Ansoika valley in the north and Omsholeko in the south of Ethiopia, where famine-prone dust-bowl has been transformed into thickly forested places with thriving ecosystems.

As well as now fully supporting the local people, these areas are seeing the gradual

return of indigenous flora and fauna, an encouraging indicator of progress towards successful environmental regeneration.

The Saatusa programme concentrates on reforestation, agro-forestry, soil stabilization and the training of local farmers in reforestation and conservation techniques. By 1995 it is expected that well over ten million trees will have been planted.

While changes so far are promising, the real objective is not only to restore an environment, but to live in it and from it in a way that sustains rather than degrades. That means the relationships between people and the land must be radically different from traditional Western ones.

Along with reforestation, the programme is halting erosion. To implement the work, the programme depends on organizing the whole local community. The people have enthusiastically seized this opportunity. Most of the work is done by people from local peasant associations.

A few words about World Vision. It is known for its Child Sponsorship programme, which assists children and their families in less developed countries, its 40 Hour Famine programme and emergency relief work around the globe. It is a Christian humanitarian organization through which more than 114 000 children are sponsored in 44 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is committed to long-term total community development as a solution to poverty.

This link between *Wild*, World Vision and Saatusa, Ethiopia, is a new initiative, a stand in support of the people of that place who are fighting to reverse the destruction of their geographic heritage and protect themselves from drought and starvation at the same time. *Wild* readers will be an important part of the link and I hope will be able to share some of the aspirations, achievements, celebrations, culture and traditions of the Saatusa people. Our support is being channelled through World Vision's 'Project Partners' programme, which supports specialist long-term community development projects around the world.

Readers are encouraged to join us in financially supporting Saatusa too, and can send donations (which are tax-deductible), marked *Wild & World Vision Support*, to World Vision Australia, GPO Box 9944, Melbourne, Vic 3001. *Wild* readers who respond will not be approached in any way by World Vision.) As foreshadowed by the previous Editorial, at the same time we'll be contributing directly to Saatusa, and to local conservation organizations. We'll give part of all our 1992 subscription and mail-order goods sales. This means that every time you subscribe to *Wild* (including renewals and gift subscriptions) or buy 'Wild things' from us, you are helping Saatusa and Australian projects. We'll inform you regularly of how much you, and we, have given, and bring you up to date as we receive fresh news about the project. I urge you all to join us in giving generously to such a worthwhile project and to show that *Wild* readers care. ■

Chris Baxter  
Managing Editor





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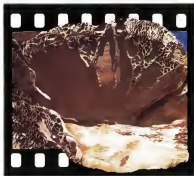
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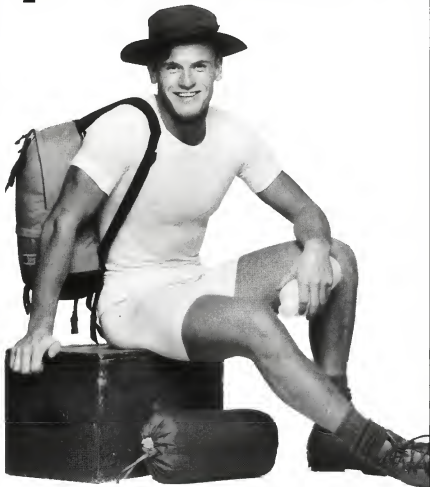
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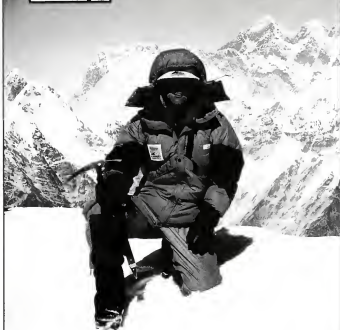
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THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

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Photo Stephen Hamilton



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# IGHWAY ROBBERY

Are trail fees legal? and where do they go?

## Parliamentary committee concerned

A committee of the Victorian Parliament has found that the Alpine Resorts Commission had no legal basis for charging cross-country trail fees at Victorian ski resorts in 1991. In its report to State Parliament, the Legal & Constitutional Committee, a subcommittee of elected members, which reviews all regulations, considers that the Alpine Resorts Act does not clearly authorize the ARC to impose trail fees by regulation. It also concludes that 'there is sufficient debate as to the power to impose the cross country ski trail charges to raise the possibility that a court may find the fees uncollectable at law'. In other words, it is the view of the members that a legal challenge to the charging of trail fees by the ARC would stand a reasonable chance of success.

The committee consequently recommends that the Alpine Resorts (Cross Country Trail Fees) Regulations, which establish the fees, be disallowed, and a motion to that effect was passed by the Legislative Council last October. However, as the repeal of the regulations requires that both Houses of Parliament pass such a motion, and since the Legislative Assembly did not pass such a motion, or even consider the issue within the prescribed period, the regulations are still in force. The government's response to the motion in the Upper House was to say that the ARC believed it was acting entirely within the law in charging the fees. None the less, the then Minister for Tourism, and Conservation & Environment, Steve Crabb, intended to introduce legislation in the spring 1992 session of Parliament which would amend the Alpine Resorts Act and clearly establish the legal power to collect trail fees. The Legal & Constitutional Committee report says that this proposal 'does not, however, alleviate the concerns of the Committee. Members consider it unacceptable that the fees be collected for another ski season without clear authority.' It subsequently appeared that the legislation would be introduced in autumn.

In the same report, the Legal & Constitutional Committee concludes that the ARC failed to produce the Regulatory Impact Statement required by law before amending its regulations to increase resort entry charges, and places on record 'its strong concern that these regulations were made without the usual processes of public assessment and justification, and without consultation with affected individuals and groups'.

The ARC did prepare a Regulatory Impact Statement before the 1991 ski season in the course of seeking approval for the regulations which, it believed, would allow it to charge the cross-country trail fees. In that statement, the ARC says: 'The proposed fees will not impose any additional collection costs. A mechanism already exists to collect Gate Entry fees [and]



The sun may be shining, but the past is murky and the future is under a cloud. Trail-fee sign at Wire Plain near Mt Hotham, Victoria. Glenn Tempest

this same mechanism will be used to collect the cross country trail fees'; and, earlier: 'There is no real cost to the Government and to the Commission as no additional staff or accommodation will be required as the services are already provided by the Alpine Resorts Commission.' In reality, as many cross-country skiers will have noticed, collection booths were built, and staffed full time—at least on weekends—for the sole purpose of collecting trail fees (see Wild Information, Wild no 43). Skiers are entitled to ask what proportion of the income to the ARC from trail fees paid during 1991 was consumed by the very process of collecting them, especially when the argument that they would cost nothing to collect was used to justify their introduction.

There are other questions concerning public money spent to provide facilities for cross-country skiers. The statement mentioned above reveals that, of the \$1 005 000 that the ARC anticipated spending on trails and other facilities during 1990-91, a total of 45 per cent was for trail maintenance in summer and winter, while 46 per cent was for 'resort operation costs...directly or indirectly attributable to providing cross country trails'. The remaining nine per cent was to be spent to provide a ski patrol. The ARC's credibility would be enhanced if it were to publish a breakdown of income from trail fees and accounts of expenditure at each resort, and allow the public to see—and skiers in particular—to see exactly what it is doing with their money.

## Wild Diary

April	17-20	Australian All Schools Championships C	NSW	(03) 817 5934
June	14	Paddy Pallin Rogaine	NSW	(02) 517 1011
		STAY Cross country	Vic	(03) 651 2107
		Ski Show		
	27-28	Pre-World Championships C	Italy	(03) 817 5934
July	11-12	Junior World Championships C	Norway	(03) 817 5934
	26	Australian Telemark Association race S	Vic	(03) 729 7844
		Kingspore Classic S	Vic	(057) 77 5731
August	1	Cabrarnura Tour S	NSW	
	1-2	Olympic slalom S	Spain	(03) 817 5934
	8-9	Subaru Winter Classic M	Vic	(03) 653 8611
	12	KAC Marini S	NSW	(02) 818 3379
	15	Paddy Pallin Classic S	NSW	(02) 416 7334
	23	Australian Telemark Association race S	Vic	(03) 729 7844
		Rocky Valley Rush S	Vic	(060) 20 8660
	29	Kangaroo Hoppet, Australian Enduroseries, Joey Hoppet S	Vic	(057) 517 3103
September	5	Charles Derrick Memorial S	Vic	(060) 24 5974
	6	ATA National Championships S	NSW	(03) 729 7844
	12	McWilliams Hotham to Falls Creek S	Vic	(03) 531 4536
	13	Aries Kosciuszko Tour S	NSW	(02) 638 7668
October	3-5	Subaru Spring Classic M	NSW/ACT	(03) 653 8611
	6-9	Ski and Outdoor Trade Show	ACT	(03) 384 1702
	17-18	Hawkesbury Canoe Classic C	NSW	(02) 580 8908

C canoeing M multi-sports S skiing



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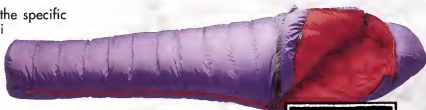
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*Paddy Pallin*

**THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE**



### Much ado

In this issue we introduce what we hope will become a regular and much-used service to *Wild* readers: a calendar of significant forthcoming events in all the fields *Wild* covers. Bushwalking, free-heel skiing, canoeing, climbing, caving and conservation—we expect they'll all be there, as will multi-sports events with genuinely 'wild' content. Don't expect a list of triathlons, mountain bike races or 'pier-to-pubs'; but do look in *Wild Diary* for useful information about what's coming up, and do let us know of any events you think it should include. Note carefully *Wild's* deadlines, as published on page 5 of this issue, and send information to *Wild Diary* at the address shown.

### Corrections and amplifications

The reference to 'Ron Jackson' on page 40 of *Wild* no 43 should have read 'Bill Jackson'.

### QUEENSLAND

#### Byamee rises early

Byamee is the name given by some north Queensland Aborigines to tiger walker Peter Treseder during his 'flying visit' to Cape York Peninsula, reported in *Information, Wild* no 42. During September, Treseder became the first person to make the round trip from Binna Burra Lodge to O'Reilly's Guest House and back by way of Coomera Crevice and Coomera Falls, in Lamington National Park—a distance of 45 kilometres. Coomera Crevice had been descended for the first time only two years earlier. Treseder completed the trip in 3 hours 58 minutes, and was back at Binna Burra before breakfast was served at 8.00 am.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### Going flat out

The NSW Canoe Association is beginning work on a guide to flat-water canoeing in the State, and is looking for contributors with information on various venues. This will be organized under the headings: General introduction; Access; The trip; Hazards and warnings; Maps. Please contact project co-ordinator Anna Coote, NSW Canoe Association, PO Box 29, Glebe, NSW 2037. Information regarding water levels on 13 selected rivers in NSW is available by telephoning 0055 50889; the service is updated every Thursday morning.

#### Rewinding history

In November 1991, Peter Treseder ran the length of the Hume and Hovell Walking Track—a distance of 430 kilometres—in just under three days. The track follows the course of the explorers' 1824 expedition from Cooma Cottage, Hume's home in Yass, as far as a tree marked by the intrepid pair beside the Murray River at Albury. Treseder completed the journey in the reverse direction in 2 days and 23 hours. He passed through the Blowering area 167 years to the day after Hume and Hovell, but at somewhat greater speed.

#### Planting project

During January, outdoor equipment supplier Paddy Pallin marked the first anniversary of

the death of its founder (see *Information, Wild* no 40) by distributing in its shops thousands of packets of seeds—of selected Australian tree species, one appropriate to the locality of each shop—and by planting young trees in selected locations. The company hopes to make the hand-outs and the plantings annual events. In another environmental initiative, Paddy Pallin has introduced a scheme to discourage the use of disposable carry-bags. For each customer who makes a purchase but chooses not to take a bag, the company puts ten cents into a collection box for an environmental cause.



Fitzgeralds Hut, Bogong High Plains, Victoria, 1903-91. David Tatnall

### VICTORIA

#### Fitzgeralds Hut

Fitzgeralds Hut, one of the oldest cattlemen's huts on the Bogong High Plains, burned down early on 2 December. A group of young students spending the night in the hut could not control the blaze, which started from a cooking fire. Fitzgeralds Hut was built in 1903 by George Fitzgerald, whose descendants still live at Shannonnale, near Omeo, and run cattle on the Bogong High Plains during summer. George Fitzgerald accompanied many parties on trips to the High Plains during the 1920s and 1930s, notably those from the Melbourne Women's Walking Club, who became known as 'Fitzgerald's Circus'. The hut was built of woolly-butt palings and roofed with shingles; a galvanized-iron roof was added in 1928, and a new chimney during the 1930s. At last report, the Fitzgerald family planned to rebuild the hut and hoped it would be finished by the end of January. They had received donations from several sources but intended to do the work themselves. There was, however, opposition from some quarters to the plan to rebuild. The Department of Conservation & Environment was understood to be seeking opinions on the matter.

#### Many Murraythons

Western Australian paddler David Ahmed was the surprise winner on handicap of the 1991 ICI Red Cross Murray Marathon. He was the first in 23 years to win the marathon in a white-water kayak. Victorian Chris Le Dieu was second in a K1, and Anthony White in a TK1 was third. Geoff Allan was first over the line, and Kim Major, in 14th place overall, was

the first woman to finish. The 404 kilometre marathon begins every year on 27 December at Yarrowwonga and ends on New Year's Eve at Swan Hill. The 1991 event attracted 530 entrants and has so far raised \$135 000 for the Red Cross.

#### Taken a walk

The Melbourne Walking Club has announced that, after publishing its annual journal *The Walker* every year since 1929, the 1991 issue will be the last. *The Walker* (or *The Melbourne Walker*, as it was known until the 1985 issue when a colour cover was also introduced) provided inspiration and information to Victorian bushwalkers for decades when little else was available. But, in recent years, as membership of the all-male Melbourne Walking Club has aged and dwindled, *The Walker* has enjoyed correspondingly diminished support and appeal. Fewer than 1000 copies of the 1991 issue were sold, resulting in a financial loss to the club. In its demise *The Walker* follows a similar publication by another major Victorian bushwalking club: *Walk* was published annually by the Melbourne Bushwalkers for the period 1949 to 1987, inclusive.

#### Canoe and kayak championships

The 1992 Subaru Australian Slalom Championships, held on the Goulburn River near Eildon on 17-19 January, were hailed as a great success. A week-long 'paddle and participate' programme for non-competitors and a 'slalomes' event for children between five and twelve also proved popular. Paddlers from the Victorian Institute of Sport were very successful in the major events, filling five of the top six places in the women's single kayak class and three of the top six in the corresponding men's event. Danielle Woodward and Richard Macquire were clear winners in their respective classes. Eildon resident David Heard finished third on his home patch in the men's single Canadian class, which was won by Peter Eckhardt, a Tasmanian enrolled at the Australian Institute of Sport.

#### Name-calling

The State Government late last year gave dual English and Aboriginal names to 32 places and natural features in the Grampians including the range itself, henceforth to be known as 'Grampians (Gariwerd)'. According to a report in the *Age* on 16 October, the new dual names recommended by the Place Names Committee were a watered-down version of 76 name changes initially proposed by the then Minister for Tourism, and Conservation & Environment, Steve Crabb, and were accepted despite some vigorous opposition. A petition to Parliament bore 30 000 signatures of those against the move; the mayor of Stawell was said to be 'incensed'; and State Liberal-National Party coalition policy is to reverse the changes.

### TASMANIA

#### Gruunting continues

The fight to save Exit Cave continues (see *Green Pages* in this issue), and caving activity at Ida Bay has been hectic. The discovery late in 1991 of a significant extension to a very



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*Pussy Pollin*

**THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE**



difficult cave called Little Grunt took its known depth from 130 to 165 metres and its known length to more than 2373 metres. The breakthrough came when Vera Wong pushed through a very tight squeeze at the top of what was the final, 27 metre pitch. This yielded another pitch, which broke through into a large passage reminiscent of Exit Cave itself. This new section leads downstream to within 250 metres of Exit Cave's Eastern Passage.



The East Face of Mt Cook, New Zealand, seen from the Grand Plateau soon after the avalanche which reshaped it. The Hochstetter Icefall, which carries the Grand Plateau's ice down to the Tasman Glacier, is buried under debris in the left foreground. **Right**, this view north to the High Peak shows the summit ice cap towering over the hole left by the slide. When rockfall eventually subsides, climbers can look forward to a steep finish to climb on the 'new' East Face. *Trevor Chinn*

More significant is the upstream extension, which lies directly beneath Benders Quarry. This confirms what cavers have believed all along: that the extraction of limestone has a direct and significant adverse impact on Australia's longest cave system.

*Stephen Buntton*

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Skeletons in the closet

The discovery of two skeletons in Mulla-mullang Cave, below the Nullarbor Plain, was reported during 1991. Cavers from the National University Caving Club found the first, and police found the second some weeks later. Evidence suggested that their deaths may have taken place shortly after the discovery of the cave in 1964. Police were said to be interested in the fact that no lights were found with the bodies. The skeletons were discovered in a region more than three kilometres from the entrance, and it was suggested that they might have been those of Aborigines, their lamps of burning bark having decayed in the interim.

During an expedition to Mulla-mullang Cave during August, members of the

Speleological Research Group of Western Australia installed signs in the cave asking people not to visit the part of the cave known as the Dome. The region once housed a population of a rare cave spider which has not been sighted in the past four years, and the executive of the Australian Speleological Society decided in January 1991 that visits there should be discouraged.

*SB*

### Fund-raiser

Terry Bolland, who last May completed an epic 24 000 kilometre journey around Australia, has raised \$3500 as a result of the trip for Murdoch University's early intervention programme for autistic children. The trip took exactly one year, and was made up of 4700 kilometres of kayaking, including 2500 kilometres from near the source of the Murray River to the sea; 3500 kilometres on foot, including 1600 kilometres through the Great Sandy Desert; and 15 800 kilometres of cycling.

### Avon Descent finding

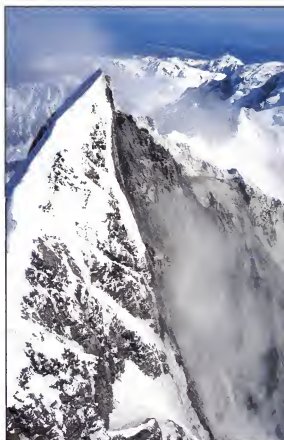
During December, the Northam Coroner found that a competitor in the 1991 Avon Descent, who drowned when his kayak capsized and became pinned to a concrete pylon of the Katrine Bridge, died by accident. According to an article in the *West Australian* on 12 December, the Coroner's report said that competitors had to take responsibility for their own safety, but also contained 'constructive criticism' for the event's organizers regarding safety measures. The Avon Descent is an annual two-day race on the Avon River, contested by competitors in kayaks, canoes and surf skis as well as small powered craft. It begins at Northam and finishes on the Swan River at Bayswater, Perth. The death of Blair Shorter, aged 19, of Mt Lawley, was the first in 18 years of Avon Descents.

## OVERSEAS

### Mt Cook profile

On 14 December a huge slide of rock and ice significantly altered the shape of the High

Peak of Mt Cook (3764 metres), the highest mountain in New Zealand. An area 800 metres high, 500 metres wide and about 100 metres deep—approximately the upper third of the East Face—fell away and left the 20 metre thick summit ice slopes diminished in size, potentially unstable, and overhanging a huge, concave scar. The collapse began just after midnight and lasted for several hours. Climbers in Plateau Hut at the time reported terrific noise and sparks from falling rocks, but were unharmed. Debris covered half the Grand Plateau—travelling, it is estimated, at



around 300 kilometres an hour—and continued up and over one of the Anzac Peaks and down at even greater speed to the Tasman Glacier, approximately 3000 vertical metres and a distance of 6.5 kilometres from the summit!

It is expected to be some time before climbers venture on to the High Peak again, though locals are hopeful that the winter snows will rebuild the ice cap and coat the face. Conditions on the Linda Glacier route may be back to normal by next summer. Two New Zealand mountain guides had ascended the East Face five days before the collapse, and reported good conditions and no untoward rock movement. Some observers suggested that this year's heavy snowfalls and recent hot weather might have contributed to the avalanche; others thought it more likely that it was the result of long-term geological processes.

Two young climbers from Canberra were killed on Boxing Day while descending the Freshfield Glacier from the Grand Plateau



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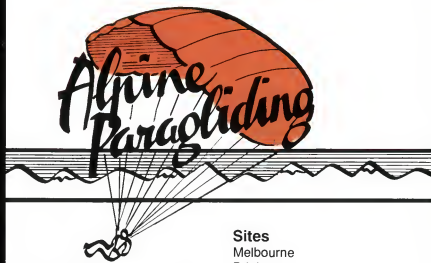
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Paddlers on the Whanganui River, New Zealand, during the 1991 Lifespan Mountains to Sea event. **Below**, Australians Mike Wentworth (left), Craig Johnson and Glen Davison after finishing fourth in the event. Johnson rode 40 kilometres on a damaged bicycle after a heavy crash. Derek Paterson

below Mt Cook. They were carried into a crevasse and buried by a wet surface avalanche. A third climber survived the accident.

#### Tight finish

To travel the 287 kilometre course of New Zealand's toughest three-day multi-sports event in a little over 16 hours is no mean feat.



In 1990, three Victorians calling themselves the Aussie Plot did just that, and won the women's team title of the Lifespan Mountains to the Sea. In 1991 they returned, renamed the Aussie Vlug and with Melbourne marathon runner Debbie Williams in place of Joanne Cowan. Commonwealth cycling champion Kathryn Watt took her bike, while paddling wonder Jane Hall planned to borrow a boat once again. They were accompanied by Australia's first male entrants in the event: two teams, one representing Peregrine Adventures and the other, called the Aussie Nobodies, led by Grant Hughes of Sydney.

The Mountains to the Sea course descends 1500 metres from the flank of an active volcano—the highest mountain in the North Island—to the west coast. Whilst it's mostly

downhill, the drop is not obvious over the daunting length of the course, particularly along 122 kilometres of paddling on the slow and remote Whanganui River.

The two men's teams finished third and fourth against their Kiwi opponents, but the Australian women were right in the race throughout.

Because the river sections are so long, the paddler's performance is pivotal. Jane Hall was recovering from a virus when she began the short, 35 kilometre paddle on the first day, and lost several minutes to the Kiwi team. On the second day, however, she powered ahead and after 6 hours and 34 minutes had narrowed the gap to seven minutes.

Day three consists of a 30 kilometre run and a final, 54 kilometre cycle. A wet road forced both Kiwi Ruth Hight—A Commonwealth Games triathlete—and Peregrine cyclist Craig Johnson into roadside ditches. Hight protected her bike by landing on her leg; Johnson continued the race with bent forks.

The Aussie Vlug eventually finished second to the New Zealand women's team by a very tight three minutes, in a total time of 16 hours and 55 minutes, but vowed to return in 1992 to take the title back.

Rob Greenaway

#### Keeping up with the Harrises

On 28 September 1991, mountain guide Geoff Wyatt, Tasmanian-born but a long-time resident of New Zealand, made a solo ski traverse of the Harris Mountains in New Zealand's South Island. It is believed that the traverse had been completed only twice before, each time in more than four days. Wyatt left Treble Cone ski field at 6:00 am with a companion who later became ill and was flown back to Treble Cone after a chance meeting with a party of heli-skiers. Wyatt continued alone, and eventually completed the trip by torchlight, reaching the car-park at Coronet Peak ski field at 8:30 pm. Along the way, he covered a distance of 45 kilometres, climbed seven peaks, descended more than 3200 metres and did more than 3150 metres of climbing.

#### High underground

An Australian expedition to Thailand during 1990 discovered a natural column 61.5 metres high—the world's highest—in a cave called Tham Lot, about 300 kilometres north-west of Bangkok. The tallest column known before

this (39 metres) is in China; the tallest stalagmite (29 metres) is in France. Australia's tallest column is the Begum (24 metres), in Kubla Khan Cave, Tasmania; the Khan itself (17 metres) is Australia's tallest stalagmite (see the article in *Wild* no 39).

SB

#### Himalayas

Four Australian climbers—Michael Groom, Ian Collins, Andrew Lock and Mark Squires—reached a height of 8200 metres on Mt Everest (8872 metres) during October. They reported difficult and dangerous climbing conditions—deep, soft snow and high winds—on the upper part of the mountain. Groom was swept 900 metres down the mountain by an avalanche and, although not seriously hurt, was unable to attempt the summit. He expects to make another attempt early in 1993; all four climbers plan an ascent of the West Pillar of Makalu (8481 metres) in the near future.

The Nepal Mountaineering Association aims to rid Mt Everest of more than 50 tonnes of garbage left by climbers since the early 1950s. It has appealed for help with a planned two-year clean-up of the world's highest peak. It has also asked the Nepalese Government to ban the use of lead oxide, mercury and lithium batteries by visitors to the area because of the particularly serious environmental problems these present. The association estimates that, in total, the Himalayas contain 150 tonnes of expedition waste—including one wrecked helicopter.

The Himalayan Trust was set up during the 1960s by Edmund Hillary (now Sir Edmund) and fellow mountaineers, who recognized the invaluable support given to climbers and other visitors to the Himalayas by the Sherpa people of the Khumbu region. The trust has been involved in reforestation projects and in the construction of schools, hospitals, medical clinics, water pipelines and bridges. At present, it is raising funds for the rebuilding of the monastery at Thyangboche, which was destroyed by fire on 19 January 1989. Those who donate \$US150 or more will receive a signed copy of *Sagarmatha*, a reputedly splendid book of photographs of the region and its people edited by Sir Edmund Hillary. Send cheques by registered mail to the Himalayan Trust, PO Box 224, Kathmandu, Nepal, and indicate that yours is a 'Sagarmatha book donation'.



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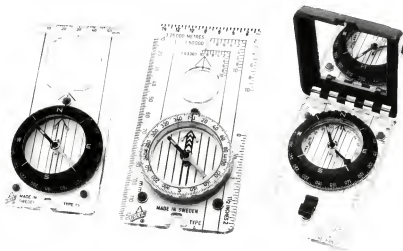




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## WILD INFORMATION

### More caving news

In July 1991, Australian cavers Anne Gray, Fran Rose and David Stuckey joined a French expedition to the Gouffre Berger (-1242 metres), near Grenoble—the tenth-deepest known cave in the world. Rose reached the Petzls Gallery at -250 metres, whilst Gray and Stuckey became the 11th and 12th Australians to reach the beginning of the terminal sump at -1105 metres. To proceed deeper it is necessary to dive. Also with the expedition was 60-year-old Jean Cadoux, who was a member of the party which discovered and first explored the cave in 1953. Cadoux reached a depth of -860 metres. He had not been caving since 1956 and was using single-rope technique for the first time.

Beth Treseder

### Enfant phénomène?

Mont Blanc (4807 metres), Europe's highest mountain, has been climbed by a seven-year-old. According to a report in the *Tribune de Genève* of 9 August 1991, Valérie Schwartz made the ascent with her parents after undertaking numerous ski tours and climbs, progressively more difficult, in the preceding two years. The three were pictured on the summit looking relaxed and happy. Mountain guides, doctors and others in the nearby centre of Chamonix were apparently taken aback by the feat. The report went on (our translation): 'And Valérie, what did she make of all this? On reaching the summit, she said to her mother: "It was very hard, but I'm happy to have done it."'

### Going up?

The September 1991 bulletin of the International Union of Alpine Associations (UIAA) contains a report on the use of hyperbaric bags, or portable compression chambers, in the treatment of acute mountain sickness (AMS), a sometimes fatal malady common among those who travel to high altitudes without adequate acclimatization. These devices can simulate a return to lower altitudes, hitherto clearly the favoured option for those suffering from AMS. Copies of the article are available for a nominal fee from the Mountain Medicine Data Centre, c/- Department of Neurological Sciences, St Bartholomew's Hospital, 38 Little Britain, London EC1, UK. For more about altitude sickness, see the article 'High Today, Gone Tomorrow' in *Wild* no 29.

### Mad? No, nomad!

For the first time, Australians have been invited to compete in the *Marathon des Sables*, or Sand Marathon, a 200 kilometre foot race across the southern Sahara Desert in Morocco due to take place during April. We hasten to add that participants will take seven days to cover the distance in six stages, and will carry their own food, water and sleeping gear. Organizers will set up laser beacons to assist with night-time navigation! For more information, contact Russell Wilson, whose facsimile number in Forest Hills, New York, USA, is (718) 291 6978. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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# VICTORIAN WILDERNESS IN THE BALANCE

Land Conservation Council recommendations released

## Give and take

Initial reaction to final recommendations of the Wilderness Special Investigation, released by Victoria's Land Conservation Council during December, was mixed. A report in the *Weekly Times* on 11 December described mountain cattlemen as 'pleased'. Conservationists, on the other hand, expressed responses ranging from the politely disappointed to the irate.

The total area of declared wilderness in the State will rise to 786 000 hectares should the recommendations be accepted in their entirety. There will be 15 new Wilderness Areas: Sunset, Minook, Galpunga, North Wyperfeld and South Wyperfeld in the Mallee; Mt Darling-Snowy Bluff, Razor-Viking, Wabba and Buchan Headwaters in the Alps; Snowy River, Bowen, Genoa, Sandpatch and Cape Howe in East Gippsland; and the north-eastern portion of Wilsons Promontory. Three areas on the State border will be added to Wilderness Areas in New South Wales: Indi and Cobberas—the latter containing Cowombat Flat as well as the peaks of the Cobberas—will abut the Pilot Wilderness; and Tingaringy will join the Byadbo Wilderness. Two blocks—28 800 hectares in total—will be added to the existing Big Desert Wilderness. However, a 350 hectare portion of the existing Avon Wilderness Area will revert to State Forest 'to provide camping opportunities for a wider range of users and in response to increased four-wheel-drive use in the general area'.

The Blue Rag Range and the upper Wongungarra River, home to one of three known populations of the spotted tree frog, are included in one of 24 'other areas with remote and natural attributes' that were recognized in the report but where it was judged, for various reasons, that 'existing permitted uses' should continue. In the case of the Wongungarra 'other area', those uses include some logging and grazing, deer-hunting, and vehicle access along the Blue Rag Range four-wheel-drive track to a campsite on the river. Furthermore, the north-western boundary of the protected area follows the Wongungarra and hence excludes alpine ash forests on the slopes of Mt Murray and the Barry Range that were considered to be 'a critical resource for the timber industry in the north-east'. The way is left open for creation of a Wongungarra Wilderness Area in the future, but whether that takes place still depends entirely on the fate of those forests. Also awarded 'B-grade' status were parts of the Mallee and the Grampians, the Baw Baw Plateau, the Macalister River headwaters, Mt



Mt Bogong, Victoria, seen from Mt Fainter North across the headwaters of Fainter Creek. As Victoria ponders how best to protect its remaining wild places, there are plans to log the alpine ash forests right up to Bogong Jack Saddle, the small clearing visible at lower left.

Bogong, and the eastern Bogong High Plains, the northern Buffalo Plateau and Davies Plain, among others.

Representatives of the major conservation organizations welcomed some aspects of the recommendations and were highly critical of others. The general view seems to be that the LCC has not gone far enough: too little land protected; too few vehicle tracks closed; too many concessions to environmentally damaging 'other uses'. There have been many calls for the State Government and the Opposition to strengthen the protection given to wilderness when the recommendations are considered in the autumn session of Parliament.

It may be instructive to recall that the State Conservation Strategy, published in June 1987, contains the following admirable sentiments: '...the Government's objectives for protecting flora and fauna are to...preserve remaining areas of high wilderness quality'. Further, it tells us:

Application of the Conservation Strategy over the next decade will lead to some of the most significant improvements ever to accrue to the

Victorian environment. For instance, by the turn of the century we will have...preserved Victoria's major wilderness areas...

The final recommendations are in, but the jury is still out.

## Threatened Species Bill

Legislation with the aim of protecting native Australian animal populations and their habitat was introduced in the Senate last September by the Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator John Coulter. It was expected that the Threatened Species Bill, as it is known, would be debated by the Parliament during March. The Bill encourages the States to protect threatened species but gives the Commonwealth power to act if the States fail to do so. It provides for community involvement—it gives any person or organization the authority to nominate a species or population as threatened and to follow the matter up in the courts—and provides for grants and compensation, where appropriate, to land-owners, to conservation and other groups, and to the States. The period for comment on the Draft Bill has passed, but copies are available from Senator John Coulter's office—telephone (08) 333 0277. Interested readers can write to the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, c/- Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600, to



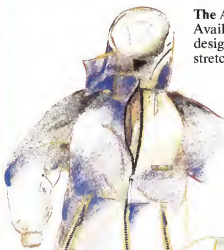
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suggest that they should support the Threatened Species Bill 1991.

### Forest plunder continues

The decision announced by Minister for Resources Alan Griffiths in January to renew export licences for woodchips from native forests, and the continuing push for resource security legislation, have left the Keating Government's environmental credibility in short supply. Ironically, indicators point clearly to a looming decline in demand for timber from native forests, and increases in both availability of, and preference for, plantation-grown softwood timber. The *Report of the National Plantation Advisory Committee*, launched by the Government during November, is but one to identify this trend.

### Rubbish report

Sunday 1 March was the third annual Clean Up Australia Day. Groups around the country collected rubbish, removed graffiti and planted trees. More than 4500 of the 323 000 participants in the previous Clean Up Australia Day, on 24 March 1991, filled in forms indicating what they found, and the results have been published in a booklet entitled *The Rubbish Report*. In all, the event netted more than 20 000 tonnes of rubbish. Packaging—including food and drink containers, bottles, cans and cigarette packets—accounted for approximately three-quarters of all items collected. The next most numerous were cigarette butts: 72 197 alone were picked up by those who filled in the forms. The list of materials most commonly discarded contains no surprises—plastic, glass, paper and cardboard head the list—and indicates how far we have to go in our efforts to cut down on waste. For the record, items found included more than 2000 dumped cars, 70 shopping trolleys, three sets of false teeth, 32 bongos and a Mills and Boon book collection. Less amusing was the discovery of dead sea-birds entangled in rope, others covered in oil, and a snake with its head stuck in a soft-drink bottle.

### NORTHERN TERRITORY

#### Damaging leaks

Conservationists took some heart from the annual report of the Office of the Supervising Scientist for 1991, which, they claimed, vindicated the decision of the Hawke Government to prevent mining in the Coronation Hill 'conservation zone' and add the land instead to Kakadu National Park. The report apparently found that radioactive waste from the Ranger uranium mine was escaping into the Magela Creek system and threatening extensive wetlands within the park. Hardly good news in itself, this finding nevertheless reinforces the arguments against mining in the Kakadu region and is a blow to any suggestion that the Coronation Hill case should be reconsidered.

#### Kakadu bushwalking review

The Kakadu Board of Management is reviewing all bushwalking activities in Kakadu National Park. An operator of bushwalking tours in Kakadu, whose concerns

were mentioned in Green Pages, *Wild* no 42, has received confirmation that helicopters may not land in the park except at Jabiru and Coinda airstrips. This rules out wet-season access to parts of the park otherwise accessible only by vehicle tracks.

### QUEENSLAND

#### Hinchinbrook under threat

The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service has a new policy of allowing commercial tour operators increased use of National Parks.

Several companies are keen to exploit Hinchinbrook Island. The NPWS has received applications for permits to conduct guided bushwalks, sea-kayak safaris and yacht rental. All would use campsites on the bays, and parts of the east coast walking track.

At present, the limit of 40 persons is fully subscribed by non-commercial visitors. Consequently, assuming the limit remains in force, fewer such visitors would be able to use the track. If the limit should be raised, the increased use would result in degradation of tracks and vegetation. Beaches, campsites and tracks would become crowded, and the sense of isolation for which the island is famous would be lost.

The group Friends of Hinchinbrook wants the island to remain wild and undisturbed except by limited numbers of non-commercial visitors, who seek it out for its isolation and its natural charms. The argument is, at least in part, a selfish one—but no more selfish than that of tour operators who want to accumulate wealth at the expense of those very attractions.

There are many island National Parks along the north Queensland coast suited to commercial activity of this type—some of them already used in this way—including Dunk, Orpheus and Magnetic Islands and most of the Whitsunday group. Only on Hinchinbrook can one experience solitude on a track as spectacular as the East Coast Trail.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is at present formulating policy and considering applications for commercial activities on Hinchinbrook. It is likely that it will bow to the greater pressure, and at the moment this is coming from commercial operators.

Interested readers should write to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Pat Comben MLA, PO Box 155, North Quay, Qld 4002, and urge him to keep the Hinchinbrook wilderness uncompromised and free from commercial exploitation.

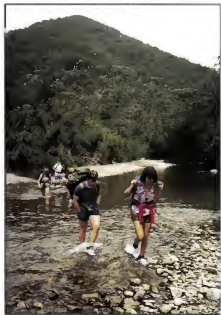
Tony Jones

#### A fresh eye

'Letter of the week' in the *Cairns Post* last September was from Ferdinand Dupuis-Panther, a travel writer from Hamburg, Germany, who lived in Australia for several years—and is a *Wild* subscriber. Dupuis-Panther, author of a book entitled *Australien*, was on his third visit to this country. In his letter he bemoans the changes that have overtaken Cairns in recent years: its architecture, which 'equalizes the shape and design of cities'; its streetscapes, disfigured by 'the dance around the tourist dollar'.

'It seems to me', the letter continues, 'that in general there is not a strong awareness of the

impact of tourism on the environment'. The treatment of Michaelmas Cay, valued for its bird life but 'as busy as Bondi Beach', receives special attention: 'I would strongly support any attempt by the Queensland Government, the Marine Park Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service to limit the number of people at the cay...I even think it might be, for a time, better to fence the area off and leave the birds and the cay alone.'



Bushwalkers cross Kowmung River in the Kanangra wilderness, Kanangra-Boyd National Park—now to be joined by Nattai National Park. Roger Lembit

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### Nattai National Park

Myles Dunphy's 1932 proposal for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park became reality late in 1991 with the passage through Parliament of the Nattai National Park Bill. Together with Wollemi, Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks, the new Nattai park provides protection for most of the bush land in the world-renowned Blue Mountains.

The new park includes part of the Mittagong-Katoomba marathon bushwalking route. Its features include Beloon Pass, which is an important part of the route; Bonum Pic, a sandstone spire overlooking the Wollondilly River; and the Nattai River, with its grassy flats and tall blue gums. It contains important habitat for wildlife including the rare brush-tailed rock wallaby and healthy populations of koalas.

Conservation groups are now pursuing World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains. A local committee has been established and the Blue Mountains City Council has given support.

Much credit for the creation of the Nattai park must go to 'born-again' independent Member for Davidson, Terry Metherell, who initiated the Bill and negotiated with the Liberal and Labor Parties and other independents in the State Parliament to ensure its



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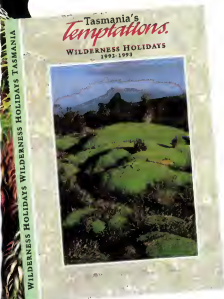
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passage. Unfortunately, one outcome of the negotiations was the classification of some less remote parts of the region as State Recreation Areas, which will allow underground coal mining to proceed there. Conservationists hope to be able to achieve stronger protection during the coming year.

Roger Lembit

### Letting off

Conservationists were outraged at reports in December that the Minister for Energy, Robert Webster, had said that oil companies would be allowed to prospect for natural gas within the new Nattai National Park. They were confident, however, that the Greiner Government would honour its well-publicized promise to Parliament not to permit mining or exploration for minerals in National Parks, and that exploration would be kept within State Recreation Areas.

### Reserves upgraded

It was announced during October that, as a result of a review of State Recreation Areas, five of them would become National Parks and a further two would be added to existing National Parks. The five reserves to be proclaimed as new parks are Lane Cove River and Georges River in Sydney; Bourma, near Bega; Booti Booti, near Forster; and Cattai and Mitchell Park, near Windsor. Davidson State Recreation Area in Sydney and part of Arakoon, near Kempsey, will be added to Garigal and Hat Head National Parks, respectively.

### Seeing red

In October 1991 the Colong Foundation for Wilderness published a brochure entitled *Wilderness 1991 Red Index* to highlight the failure of the Coalition Government in New South Wales to implement the Wilderness Act. The *Red Index* contains details of land tenure, history, conservation measures, threats faced by wilderness in the State and recommendations for its protection. It points to the poor standard of wilderness management, even in those areas under the wing of the National Parks and Wildlife Service: of 23 areas of wilderness which are contained to a significant extent within National Parks, only three are adequately managed. The *Index* points out that no wilderness has been nominated under the Wilderness Act by the Forestry Commission, in contrast to the situation in the USA, where 14 per cent of United States Forest Service land is managed as wilderness.

RL

### Kosciusko amendments

The amendments to the Kosciusko National Park Plan of Management foreshadowed in the *Ski 2000* discussion paper (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 39) were put to the public for comment late last year. They allow for significant increases to the amount of accommodation in some resorts, private development of cross-country ski trails, and the retention of Illawong Lodge. Conservation groups in NSW have strongly opposed the developments as the existing resorts are already causing severe environmental problems in the park. The groups have called

for limits on accommodation not to exceed existing levels, and for accommodation within the park gradually to be phased out, beginning at Charlotte Pass.

RL

### Byrnes Gap Hut

Repeated vandalism has prompted the owners of the private hut at Byrnes Gap in the heart of the Kanangra wilderness to complain to the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs. The hut stands next to the Water Board's Scotts Main Range Fire Track and is visible from many parts of the wilderness including the Axehead Range. The owners are happy for walkers to obtain water at the hut (which is five minutes' walk from a permanent creek) but are upset at the sporadic vandalism to which the hut has been subjected. They wish the hut to be treated as a private residence.



Byrnes Gap Hut, Kanangra wilderness—an area under threat and inadequately managed according to the *Wilderness 1991 Red Index*. Lembit

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs has been pushing for some years for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to resume the land on which the hut stands and to demolish it. The confederation resolved at a recent meeting to maintain this position.

RL

### Garbage

Last spring, a party camped above Guthega Creek in the Snowy Mountains returned from a day trip to find that their tent had been damaged, and partly buried, by snow which had slid from a set of tracks across the slope above. On following the tracks to an abandoned campsite further down the valley, the group found four skiers cleaning up the site, which had been left strewn with plastic bags and packaging, food scraps, aluminium foil and other garbage, apparently by members of the Waringah Scout Troop from Sydney. A complaint was duly lodged at State Headquarters of the Scout Association. It

seems there are some Scouts who have yet to earn their Minimum Impact Camping badge.

During July, someone left a trail of destruction through Blue Gum Forest and adjoining areas in the Blue Mountains. Rubbish was spread over several campsites and the tracks in between, consisting of everything from Roll-up wrappers to four dozen beer cans. Presumably, the same people were responsible for the mindless destruction of four saplings at Acacia Flat. This may be the most trafficked route in the Blue Mountains; whilst virgin bush would be an unrealistic expectation, surely freedom from this kind of destruction is not.

Roger Lembit and Ben Wyndham

## VICTORIA

### Business as usual at 'Mt Ho-hum'

Many people are concerned about a proposal to construct a new ski lift and develop more ski slopes of intermediate standard at Mt Hotham in the Victorian Alps. The Victorian National Parks Association has objected to the Mid Valley proposal, pointing out similarities between it and the nearby Heavenly Valley run, which it describes as 'one of the worst cases of environmental management in the Alps'. Extensive earthworks creating new intermediate slopes at Heavenly Valley were widely blamed for a huge landslide which occurred after heavy rain in December 1988 (see *Information, Wild* no 32, and the article 'Australia's Alpine Resorts' in *Wild* no 38).

Late last year the VNPA asked Minister for Planning and Housing Andrew McCutcheon to direct that an Environmental Effects Statement be prepared before the development went ahead, and claimed that not one alpine development had been subject to such a statement since the formation of the Alpine Resorts Commission in 1983. The association was alarmed at the suggestion that the Alpine Resorts Commission might first approve construction of the ski lift itself, then later consider the question of the associated earthworks.

### Overlooked

As this issue of *Wild* went to press, a classic view of Mt Bogong, in the Alpine National Park, was due to be marred by logging in the valley of the East Kiewa River—an area legislated but not yet proclaimed as part of the park. It is proposed that, during the next few years, logging continue right up to the snow gum-alpine ash boundary at Bogong Jack Saddle and on a prominent ridge in the foreground of the view of Mt Bogong from Mt Fainter North. Although the Department of Conservation & Environment's landscape assessment considered the impact of logging on views from the Falls Creek Road and from Spion Kopje on the Bogong High Plains, it did not consider the view from Mt Fainter North. The quality of the timber in the area in question near Mt Fainter North is described by the department's own resource survey as 'generally poor'. The Land Conservation Council concluded in its 1983 Final Recommendations for the Alpine Area that the East Kiewa valley has 'considerable potential for development for outdoor recreation' and that 'the mature alpine ash stands are among the





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few in the Alpine area that are readily accessible and could be developed as an outstanding feature of the Bogong National Park'.

#### Desert walkers' code

The Proposed Management Plan for the Big Desert Wilderness Park, published in November 1991, contains a suggested code for walkers in desert wilderness. It includes advice on planning and preparation, camping and toilet etiquette, group size, provision of water, clothing, navigation and care for the environment. The period for public comment on the proposed plan has ended.

#### Lopped for the Hoppet

Visiting Edmondsons Hut on the Bogong High Plains a few days after the running of the Kangaroo Hoppet and Australian Birkebeiner cross-country ski races on 1 September 1991, we were appalled at the damage. The tracks laid for the race were obvious, and so was the fact that several large snow gums had been 'pruned' to create a clear course. Boughs 150-200 millimetres in diameter had been lopped and chain-saw chips were evident. This pruning was not only unnecessary but, apparently, unauthorized. I have been informed that the race organizer had no authority to carry and operate a chain-saw within the Bogong National Park.

John Chapman

#### Hoppers lopped

The VNPA withdrew its support from the kangaroo population-control programme conducted by the Department of Conservation & Environment in Hattah-Kulkyne National Park after the department revealed that kangaroos had been shot outside the boundaries specified in the management plan, 'Restoring the Balance'. It appeared that the increase in culling was a local initiative without the backing of department staff in Melbourne. The association indicated that it would support the programme only for so long as it was conducted in accordance with the plan.

#### New policy on highlands

In October 1991 the VNPA released a new policy calling for the creation of more parks in Victoria's Central Highlands. The region contains rain forest; old-growth forest; alpine environments at Mt Torbreck, Lake Mountain and elsewhere; water catchments for Melbourne; and habitat of threatened species including Leadbeater's possum and the spotted tree frog—all of which, the policy states, should be incorporated into National Parks. Recent research has confirmed that many of these qualities are under threat. In particular, both government scientists and independent researchers have contradicted the claim of the forest industry that logging poses no threat to remaining populations of Leadbeater's possum, the State's faunal emblem. The new policy calls for most timber harvesting in the area's native forests to end within 15 years.

#### Eco-terror error

The VNPA has sought a retraction of a statement, published in the *Sunday Age* on 20

October, that it had sold copies of a book which advocates 'eco-terrorist' activities. In the association's November *Newsletter*, president Stephen Johnston denied that the VNPA had sold the book, which was not identified, and said that the association did not support 'the actions and attitudes advocated by its author'.

#### Down Otway way

The VNPA's November *Newsletter* also reported that the owners of beach shacks at Blanket Bay and elsewhere in Otway National Park had been granted an extension of time after failing to remove the shacks by the end of 1991. The owners received five years' notice at the end of 1986 that the shacks would have to go. When the deadline passed, they were given until 12 February to finish the job.

#### Home on the range

Several conservation groups and a resident of the Shire of Bacchus Marsh appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal last year against the Shire Council's decision to allow construction of a rifle range next to Werribee Gorge State Park. They are concerned at the effect that noise from the range—not to mention the odd stray shot—might have on visitors to the park and on resident wildlife such as wedge-tailed eagles and peregrine falcons. They also note that the presence of a rifle range in the area would conflict with recommendations made in the Bacchus Marsh Landscape Assessment Report, and would have implications for the future of the area.

#### Mt Arapiles pressures

Australia's most popular rockclimbing area has been in the news following the announcement of a study of the tourism potential of the region on behalf of the Wimmera Development Association. Conducted by economics lecturer Paul Langley for a fee reported to be \$6940, the study, due for completion in April, has received wide media coverage. Langley has been quoted as saying that Mt Arapiles is underdeveloped as a world-class tourist and recreation asset and 'must be exploited to its maximum potential'. The Wimmera Development Association is seeking to justify a suggestion to build a 'recreation and accommodation centre' in open country near the State Park and just east of the Mt Arapiles cliffline. Not surprisingly, rockclimbers, local naturalists, conservationists and others are concerned over the proposals. Readers are urged to write to the Wimmera Development Association, O'Callaghan Pde, Horsham 3400. For further information on the campaign against the proposed development write to the secretary, Meg Sleeman, PO Box 151, Natimuk 3409.

Meanwhile, it has also been announced that the Wimmera Aboriginal community will receive a grant of \$63 000 to identify Aboriginal sites at Mt Arapiles said to be endangered by rockclimbers and other park users.

Finally, a decision has been made about the future of camping at Zumsteins in the nearby northern Grampians. Zumsteins is a popular and expanding camping area near the Mt Difficult Range and the Asses Ears but the decision means that it will revert to a picnic area—a move which will be welcomed by

those concerned at the extent of commercial development in the Grampians.

#### Blitz on blackberries

A new blackberry rust fungus was officially released by the Department of Conservation & Environment in November. Department employees are distributing it as far as possible, but bushwalkers visiting remote areas at certain times of the year can assist. The department will supply vials of freeze-dried rust fungus, which must be 'painted' on to the under-side of growing blackberry shoots to have best effect. The fungus then reproduces and spreads naturally. It restricts the growth of new foliage, and enables other vegetation to compete with the blackberries and, eventually, to shade them out. The latest growing season is now over, but a new offensive is planned for the coming spring and summer. Walkers who might be able to help are welcome to contact Neville Byrne or Kim Robinson at the Department of Conservation & Environment on (03) 412 4011.

#### Soft shoe or quiet boot?

The 19 January reshuffle of the Victorian Cabinet gave the State a new Minister for Conservation & Environment. Steve Crabb held on to Tourism but surrendered the Conservation & Environment job to the former Minister for Education and Training, Barry Pullen.

#### TASMANIA

##### Over the top

The Division of Mines and Mineral Resources last year began drilling south of Benders Quarry at Ida Bay, beyond the saddle between Marble Hill and Lune Sugarloaf. The DMMR is charged with defining the magnitude of the environmental impact that any extensions to the limestone quarry would have upon the Exit Cave system. This monitoring is required under the terms of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Draft Management Plan. Exit Cave is Australia's longest known cave (see *Information*, Wild no 43).

Any quarrying beyond the saddle will result in the clear-felling of trees, bulldozing of topsoil and construction of roads. Existing quarrying has removed several caves that were no doubt a part of the Exit Cave system. Drilling beyond the saddle has already disturbed underground aquifers and resulted in the inflow of surface pollutants including oil, diesel fuel and explosives residue, and may have connected previously unrelated passages. There were two initial drilling operations, one of which aimed to define the hydrological limits of the cave's catchment. One measure proposed was tracing with the dye Rhodamine B, a known carcinogen and mutagen which is banned in the USA and several other countries.

The present intention is to quarry up to 100 metres beyond the saddle in an area registered as a 'resource use' zone. This threatens March Fly Pot, a cave containing several thylacine skeletons and the remains of an extinct giant kangaroo. The resource use zone extends to within 180 metres of Midnight Hole-Mystery Creek Cave, and the quarry is slowly being extended in this direction.



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The Ida Bay quarry is the only operational mine in a World Heritage Area anywhere, and the presence of the Exit Cave system was a major reason for extending the boundaries of the Tasmanian World Heritage Area to their present position. The mining company claims that it needs to extend the quarry and continue its operations in the area to remain viable, but it is believed that its contracts to supply expire in June and that its major customer requires a higher grade limestone than that found at Ida Bay.

According to the Draft Management Plan, 'the future extent and operation of the quarry will be subject to an environmental management plan' agreed to by the Tasmanian Government departments concerned. It seems likely, however, at least to conservationists, that quarrying will continue: unconfirmed reports suggest that the Federal Government is not prepared to pay to relocate the quarry, and that the State Government would face a compensation claim of \$1.3 million should operations cease.

At issue, it seems, is the question of defining the limits of Exit Cave so that mining can continue right up to these limits. The Helsham Inquiry concedes that the cave system extends beyond the air space that humans can enter, and includes the smaller fissures and voids through which ground water percolates to form stalactites and through which cave invertebrates can travel. This is also the view of the caving community. Cavers therefore see any extension to the quarry beyond the saddle as a threat to the integrity of the karst and cave system. The Australian Speleological Federation and the Australasian Cave and Karst Managers Association have called on both the Federal and the State Governments to close the quarry.

Stephen Buntion

### Tarkine wilderness

The Forestry Commission late last year called a halt to continued felling of the Hellyer forests, which lie on the north-eastern edge of the Tarkine wilderness in Tasmania's north-west. According to a report in the *Daily Planet*, the newsletter of the Green Independents, in November, the decision followed continued pressure from conservationists alarmed at the effects of logging on steep slopes throughout Tasmania. The commission was forced first to set limits on the nature of slopes that could be cleared, then to enforce them. The last saw, it appears, may have been a segment screened on ABC Television, which brought to light a serious landslide in a section of the Hellyer forests already logged. A soil scientist was subsequently employed to investigate, and found the region prone to serious erosion because of its steepness and its soil types. A few weeks later, the commission cancelled approval for further logging.

The Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage has proposed that the Tarkine region be investigated for World Heritage qualities, a move supported by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, which administers the World Heritage system. Even the Forestry Commission has identified 70 000 hectares of rain forest as deserving of protection. To date, however, the Tasmanian Government has not acted on these recom-

mendations. See the article by Ted Mead beginning on page 40 for more on the Tarkine wilderness.

### If you go down to the woods...

The annual Jackies Marsh Forest Festival, now a regular event, was staged again during January 1992 in the Jackies Marsh valley, surrounded by Quamby Bluff and the Great Western Tiers, in northern Tasmania. Organizers hoped that the extended festival would attract more than 1000 people into the forest for five days of celebrations including workshops, bushwalks, music and other entertainment.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

#### Huge new desert parks

On 16 December, back on page 8 of the *Advertiser*, South Australia's major daily newspaper, a few small paragraphs announced the addition of 3.68 million hectares to the area protected under the State's National Parks and Wildlife Act. The five new parks and reserves—at Lake Cairdner, Lake Torrens in the Flinders Ranges; Tallaringa, west of Coober Pedy; Lake Frome in the Gammon Ranges; and Strzelecki—and one addition to an existing National Park, at Lake Eyre, contain salt lakes and sandhills and are home to many species of birds and reptiles. Lake Frome and Lake Torrens are the only known nesting sites in South Australia of a rare bird species, the banded stilt. The new gains give South Australia an enviable system of parks in arid lands, and bring the area protected under the Act to 20.35 million hectares, or nearly 21 per cent of the State.

### OVERSEAS

#### 50S Sarawak

I recently returned to Australia from Sarawak, Malaysia, where I spent a most interesting holiday in a Malaysian jail. Eight environmentalists from different parts of the world were arrested and imprisoned for periods of up to two months after perching on cranes loading timber cut at a faster rate than anywhere else from the oldest and richest tropical forest in the world.

Ours was an action of urgency over an issue that we recognize is global. These forests would not be logged unless countries such as Japan (which imports nearly 50 per cent) and Australia were prepared to buy the timber. This was not my first visit to Sarawak. Six times over the last three years I have trekked through various parts of the steamy, dark jungle and witnessed the destruction at first hand. My guides were members of one of the last tribes of nomadic hunter-gatherers on the planet, the Penan.

I would be with the Penan now, but that would not save the forest wilderness. It is what you and I do beyond the forest, even outside Sarawak, that may help to protect it for the future. For one thing, we don't need to buy the timber. The next time you see maranti on sale in a hardware shop as a cheap timber for mouldings, doors and window frames, try to imagine where it came from.

There are encouraging signs. In Japan and elsewhere there are predictions of a decline in

consumption, but the situation is too urgent to wait. At the present rate, with logging operations carried on 24 hours of the day, there may be only five years of logging left on the whole of Sarawak.

Blockades and protests by the tribal people (who make up half the population of Sarawak) continue in ten different regions. The last of the Penan are clinging to small areas of land which could be logged out within months. They have mounted their 'last stand', and vow not to give up until they have won their struggle for land rights, self-determination, and protection for their precious forests.



In the jungle of Borneo with the nomadic Penan. Andy Frame

As I see it, these people are fighting to save the forests for all of us. Their continued, non-violent struggle inspires me and, I hope, many others to take action to protect what wilderness remains on this beleaguered planet. Rain forests everywhere, even in Australia, are still under threat. Turn your next trip into the wilderness into a mission for its protection! For more information, contact the Rainforest Information Centre, PO Box 368, Lismore, NSW 2480.

Anja Light

#### Croatia

In addition to great human suffering, the civil war in Yugoslavia has severely damaged three National Parks in Croatia. A brief report in *New Scientist*, 5 October 1991, quoted the Croatian Minister of Information, who said that Plitvice Lakes Park had been 'destroyed' by Federal Army tanks which had been occupying it since April, and that Paklajnice Park and Sibenik Park had been heavily shelled and 'used as a battlefield'.

#### Vision

As part of its ongoing work to encourage environmentally responsible and sustainable self-sufficiency among people of less developed countries, World Vision (see the Editorials in *Wild* no 43 and in this issue) has produced a series of pamphlets describing how to make extremely simple but effective water-drawing and storage equipment. Part of World Vision's Appropriate Technologies series, the brochures emphasize the use of locally available materials in equipment that can be serviced by local people. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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# CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING WITH CHILDREN

How to do it without getting cross, by Paul Campbell-Allen

Ten years ago we put our daughter, then five years old, on a pair of cross-country skis, and headed for Blue Lake with an uncle and aunt in tow. The trip was intended as an introduction to back-country skiing for the family. The season was poor and we began skiing after crossing the Snowy River. We found the long climb up to Club Lake tiring and difficult in the icy conditions. As the frustration grew, tempers became frayed and gentle encouragement gave way to frustrated haranguing. Tears were not far away. Total disaster was narrowly averted by the discovery of a lunch rock sheltered from the wind and a gentle downhill slope with a safe run-out. A morning heading for disaster ended in joyful play on the slope. Needless to say, we didn't get anywhere near Blue Lake, but no one cared.

Many times during the intervening ten years have I had cause to think back on our aborted Blue Lake trip and the lessons contained in it. Teaching your own children to ski can be extremely difficult, and many parents prefer to have their children taught professionally, outside the family circle, if only to avoid family tensions. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this, it denies you the opportunity to experience a whole world of fun and family growth.

How often have you witnessed children being literally dragged around a ski trail by their parents and heard their plaintive cries. It happens all too frequently. Why aren't these kids—and, presumably, their parents—enjoying themselves to the full in the fantastic environment of the snow? Here are a few solutions to some of the problems we've encountered when skiing together as a family group with children between the ages of five and fifteen.

## Objectives

The fundamental problem with our Blue Lake near fiasco was an unrealistic and short-sighted object. We had forgotten that the real purpose of recreational skiing is to have fun, and had replaced it with a much more limited goal. Getting somewhere may be important and may satisfy personal ambitions, but to give it precedence over having fun, particularly when children are involved, is crazy.

## Playing games

Going to the snow is like going to the beach; so, complete with inflatable beach balls, frisbees, and gallons of sunscreen, we play games in the snow. Games are a great way to learn to ski, and many instructors use them to develop techniques without the participants being aware that they're learning. For instance, a game of stuck-in-the-mud (your children will explain it to you) in an area



Anyone for a peanut? This young skier appears to be enjoying the winter conditions near Mt Loch, Victoria—and with only one ski! Michael Hampton

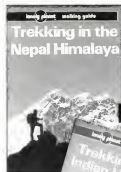
defined by ski poles is a marvellous way to develop mobility and flexibility—especially if adults have to get between the children's legs. A word of warning: leave metal-edged skis behind for this one. It's amazing to watch complete novices skating around, oblivious to

what they're doing in their desire to escape being caught.

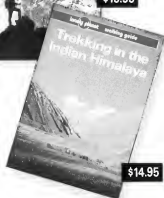
Slalom races on gentle slopes with a flat run-out, using ski poles as gates; limbo under three-pole gates; and bumps and jumps—all are easy to arrange and introduce the stimulation of friendly competition. Try taking a few lessons as a family. You will be surprised at the tricks at your instructor's disposal.



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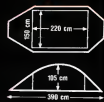
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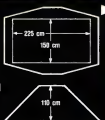
**Inner Tent**  
Height: 100 cm  
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Width: 117 cm  
Weight of tent complete: 2.2 kg

## MICRO 3

**Inner Tent**  
Height: 100 cm  
Length: 215 cm  
Width: 120 cm  
Weight of tent complete: 2.8 kg

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### Learning

Children seem to learn differently from adults and are much less analytical in their approach. Words are on the whole useless for communicating skills to children. They learn by observation and experimentation. We once took a small family group on a day trip to the Porcupine, above Perisher. During the lunch stop at the top I went for a play on a short slope nearby and was surprised to find the two boys, aged seven and nine, following me down the slope, matching my Telemark turn for turn. Nothing was said. It was all watching and doing.

The chances are that your children will imitate your technique. If this does nothing else, it should encourage you to develop your own skiing!

### Terrain

The arduous climb in icy conditions with which our Blue Lake episode began was a formula for frustration and demoralization. You may not always have a choice, but some careful thought about the country over which you intend to travel and about the likely conditions will pay dividends. Adults tend to forget that children, especially those under 12, can find relatively small changes in elevation quite exhausting and daunting. A realistic assessment of capacity is difficult to arrive at, but important: to extend people within their capacity can promote a sense of achievement, but to go beyond it will lead to misery.

Use the terrain to try different skiing techniques. This is a great way to learn, and relates technique to real applications. The basic skills needed for simple day tours on trails are those in the Australian Ski Federation Ski XC Test (Bronze): diagonal stride, downhill run, herringbone, side-step, and step turn. Add to these a kick turn and snow-plough and you have a means of getting around—see 'The Need for Speed', by Tom Millar, in *Wild* no 31. Other excellent reading material covering all aspects of technique includes the *Australian Nordic Instructor Manual*, by Ivan Trundle, and *Cross Country Skiing*, by Ned Gillette and John Dostal.

### Planning

If your children are beginners, spend a few days just playing and acquiring some skills. Make a longer day trip the goal and spend some time building up to it. The first trip should be short—like the Perisher 2.5 kilometre Nordic trail starting from the Nordic Shelter, for example. Covering a long distance is much less valuable than covering varied terrain. Take time to stop, and make use of different areas to enjoy the environment and play. A snowman at lunch-time is always a favourite. If your children coped with the shorter distance, try the five kilometre trail, or the trip up the Porcupine—again with lots of stops. The valley below Mt Wheatley has some great practice slopes out of the wind and is quite close to the Perisher terminal. Watch your return timing on the Porcupine trip as the track can get quite icy and fast from mid-afternoon on. Other areas have their equivalents.

### Stopping and going

Novice adults often find climbs relatively easy but downhill runs frightening. Most children, on the other hand, dislike climbing and relish the fast downhill.

## WILD IDEAS

Given the possibilities of hitting rocks, trees or other skiers, a technique for stopping is a prerequisite, both for safety and for the sense of security it gives. This is a case for the Sitzmark or 'single-buttock arrest'. The first thing my beginner classes do is learn to fall over. Falling to the rear and to one side with a landing on the best upholstered part of the anatomy is a safe and guaranteed way to stop. Just buckle the knees, fall sideways and backwards, and keep the poles well clear.

Getting back up after falls can be an enormous drain on energy. A few minutes practising—putting the skis across the slope, then rolling on to the knees before attempting to rise—will save a lot of trouble.

Make a game of the most spectacular fall with maximum vocal effort.

### Going down

Going down needs lots of flexibility in the knees and a stable body position with arms forward, nothing more. If you need words, try relating skiing to another activity your children have already experienced. The body tends to follow the hands, so keep the hands forward by pretending that you are holding a bicycle handlebar or hugging a large teddy bear.

Impersonating different animals is also great fun: try skiing a slope as a mouse, a kangaroo or the proverbial gorilla—with the appropriate sound effects, of course! Reach for the sky and touch your toes; ski on one ski, then the other; jump—experiment! The great thing about skiing with children is that adults can do all these things without feeling self-conscious.

### Slowing down

Pretty soon, everyone wants a stopping or slowing technique which doesn't involve falling over. For this, the trusty snow-plough is hard to beat. Most children pick it up very rapidly if you simply snow-plough down a slope in front of them. If you are confident, you can have a child snow-plough between your legs while you give support from behind. Try it with the whole family linked up in a snow-plough conga down the hill. (Leave poles behind.) The results are usually hilarious.

### Going along and up

Here, motivation is often a bigger problem than technique, especially if there are T-bars in sight. Assuming they have light skis, children very quickly pick up skating as a natural way of getting around—particularly on the flat. It's also excellent for getting the feel of committing yourself to one ski—a very useful skill when learning the diagonal stride. Hills can be walked—or jogged (with skis on!) if you're feeling energetic. On the steeper sections, simply 'duck walk' (herringbone). Don't bother with technical explanations, just go straight up with the children following directly behind, step for step. Try chanting 'duck, duck, duck' as you step.

### Weather

Wet, wind and cold are great demoralizers. The mountain environment can be dangerous, and children are more susceptible to hypothermia than adults. The article in *Wild* no 34, 'Toddlers on the Track', by Will and Carrie Steffen, is well worth reading on this and on the whole subject of walking and camping with children.

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## WILD IDEAS

### Clothing and equipment

It's remarkable how often one sees parents appropriately dressed in light, multi-layered clothing while their children tag along behind in heavily padded ski-suits. The inability to strip off, the overheating, sweating and subsequent chilling that result are uncomfortable if it's sunny and downright dangerous in poor conditions. This becomes particularly noticeable at the end of the day when temperatures fall and tiredness sets in. It is essential to have a waterproof jacket and warm jumper for every one. Make a habit of insisting that the jumper goes on as soon as you stop: chilling is surprisingly rapid. Gloves can be a subject of conflict, often because they are too hot and sweaty. Lighter gloves and overmitts help. It is important to make sure that the gloves are on if children fall over frequently, and whenever going downhill.

Proper sun protection is also essential—for the skin and the eyes—because of the amount of ultraviolet radiation reflected off the snow. Make sure that the underside of the chin and nose, and the ears, are protected.

Poorly fitting equipment can also be a problem. Take the time at the hire shop to ensure that boots fit well—not too floppy, yet not so tight that they'll cause blisters. Check the bindings on hired skis. (Loose bindings are a hazard.) We were once given two left skis and spent half a day wondering why the right boot kept slipping off the ski.

### Energy and water

Maintaining physical and emotional energy levels is essential in the snow. Plenty of scroggin and copious quantities of jelly babies—which double as encouragers and prizes—should be on hand. Dehydration is very common in the snow, where the amount of moisture lost by breathing roughly doubles the requirement for water. Lack of water seriously affects mental and physical functions, so keep the fluids up.

Watch out for energy 'crash times' and provide plenty of rests and refuelling breaks.

### Motivation

By far the best motivation is enjoyment. Assuming that physical comfort is under control, you may still need some help with motivation, particularly near the end of a day. Harder hills can be tackled with games of follow-the-leader, or with songs such as 'Hit the Road, Duck', a version of the well-known song about Jack which we developed during a forced march up Duck Creek near Valentines Hut—and one well suited to 'duck walking' up hills. Fantasy stories can help, too; we still remember the time Lord Sweet Potato strode up the snow-covered hills pursued by the evil Black Ninja.

### Skiing with friends

Taking friends of similar age to your children can be a responsibility, but introduces peer motivation, mutual encouragement, and entertainment which is independent of the parents. Children learn a lot from each other.

Finally, take the opportunity to learn from your children—especially about *how* they learn. Skiing together can be a tremendous experience for your family. Have fun! ■

*Paul Campbell-Allen has skied and bushwalked with Barbara, Ricky and other family members and friends in Australia, Japan, Canada and New Zealand during the past 12 years. Paul is an ASF Nordic instructor.*



WILD BUSHWALKING

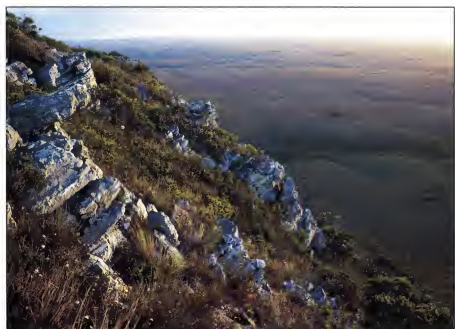
# THE FORGOTTEN WILDERNESS

Ted Mead walks unknown Tasmania



Two centuries ago, Tarkine Aborigines actively tramped the earth deep in Tasmania's north-west corner. To them it must have been a land of abundance and austere beauty, set amongst the wildest of seas and the densest of forests. Today their footsteps have faded, but the spirit of their land lives on.

Peter Sims, Grant Dixon and I decided to explore this mysterious land. It's an area seldom visited on foot, and its aesthetic values are sadly unappreciated. Although it was proposed as a National Park during the 1960s, it still remains as it was then—a forgotten wilderness.



The view across the coastal plains from the edge of the Norfolk Range. **Right**, huge middens at Ordance Point tell of generations of Aboriginal settlement. **Opposite**, the tall forests of the Tarkine wilderness with the Norfolk Range in the background. *Ted Mead*

There was an air of apprehension as we prepared to toil across the 11 kilometres of button-grass plains and heathland which extend from the isolated settlement of Balfour westward to the wild coast. No sooner had we begun than I became aware of the simple beauty of the country. The heathland was beaming with delicate splashes of colour as wild flowers and sun orchids raised their frail heads above the soil. There is a beauty hidden from the four-wheel-drive enthusiasts who venture this way.

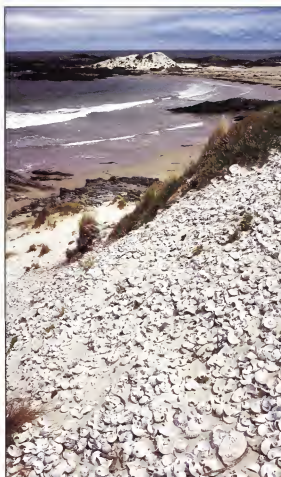
It was the wild coastline that lured me most strongly, though I was torn between the shining ocean out west and the sweeping skyline of the Norfolk Range to the south. As we arrived at Ordance Point, I was surprised to find not rugged cliffs and wild ocean but instead a picturesque, gentle setting of beaches, sand dunes and enormous Aboriginal middens, which told of generations of existence supported by the sea. Four-wheel drivers had carved their path through these historic mounds, too, and

I felt somehow robbed—a feeling reinforced when we reached Greenes Point. Here mysterious, circular rock carvings centuries old had been defaced, and removed to the State Museum. Anxious to leave this vandalism, I walked inland behind the sand dunes to where everything appeared unspoilt. I waited for evening by a lagoon, watching the abundant bird life, which reassured me that parts of this area still remained primitive and peaceful.

It was one of those perfect days in Western Tasmania as I wandered out on to the sand dunes for sunrise near

forest. We abandoned our original intention to venture inland to view the Pedder Forests from Gales Cliff; none of us was too enthusiastic about thrashing through coastal scrub in that heat. Pedder River would have to suffice! Sitting by one of many freshwater rivulets, my photographic umbrella became my refuge from the sun.

After 12 kilometres of soft sand, we reached Venables Corner. Here we were rewarded with a memorable view over the beach, with the Norfolk Range in the background. We wandered around Sandy Cape Point amongst colourful lichen-covered boulders which jutted out in promontories south to Native Well Bay. As we rejoined the sand, I glimpsed



Greenes Point. Before me an impressive view swept south across extensive sand blows towards Thornton River, and it looked as though we were in for a long walk in soft sand from here on. We continued out through enormous midden dunes and ambled along on the finest of beaches.

The Thornton River mouth was our first obstacle. The river entered the ocean through a deep gulch in the dunes, and the inky colour of the water, stained by inland peat, made it impossible to gauge the depth of the channel. We simply had to wade out into the waves and edge our way across the flow. I felt relieved that this barrier would bring to an end all evidence of vehide activity. The great, sweeping arc of Sandy Cape Beach disappeared in sea mist on the horizon; glistening sand dunes towered solitarily above. I was amazed to find such a feature here—the equal of any sand blow I'd seen on Fraser Island. Midden dunes were again a constant element of the landscape.

By the time we crossed Wild Wave Creek, our perfect day was becoming uncomfortably hot. The warm off-shore breeze and the intense glare of the sand created a desert-like atmosphere which had us longing for a cool and shady

something darting amongst the seaweed: a curious Tasmanian devil had ventured out on to the beach and was scavenging around for food—uncommon behaviour for a nocturnal predator. Once it caught sight of us, retreat was rapid.

The aptly name Sea Devil Rivulet was our objective for the day. We found an ideal camp amidst the contrast of forest and massive dunes. I wandered up this extensive sand mound at sunset, photographing patterns created by the wild elements. The evening was warm, and biting insects forced an early retreat into our tents.

A wind sprang up before dawn and by sunrise had become an unusual north-easterly gale. Peter said, 'There's a front



A photograph showing a person standing on a dark, rocky outcrop. The sky is filled with heavy, dramatic clouds, and the sea is visible in the foreground with white foam from breaking waves. The overall mood is dramatic and atmospheric.

Four more waves now crashed against the rocky headland. I ventured down to the rocks while Peter and Grant relaxed on the headland. Waves crashed at my feet, sending rainbows sweeping across the horizon. It was exhilarating—until a really huge wave approached. There was a lull in the wind as the wave smashed against the rocks, sending a wall of water towards me. I turned and cringed, holding my camera tightly against my body as the mighty wave drenched me. It was over in seconds, and I retreated quickly, glad that I'd been wearing my raincoat. I sat and admired the endless lines of swell as they rolled in. It was an impressive sight.

Map of the Mt. Hattin area in Western Australia. The map shows a network of rivers and creeks, including the Fortescue River, Ord River, and various smaller creeks like Bungle Creek, Thunder Creek, Wild Horse Creek, Green Creek, Pedder River, and Lagoon River. Key locations marked include Yumba, Balbur, Mt. Balbur (438 m), Mt. Hattin, Mt. Warburton, and several camps (Camp 1, Camp 2, Camp 3, Camp 4, Camp 5, Camp 6, Camp 7, Camp 8, Camp 9, Camp 10, Camp 11, Camp 12, Camp 13, Camp 14, Camp 15, Camp 16, Camp 17, Camp 18, Camp 19, Camp 20, Camp 21, Camp 22, Camp 23, Camp 24, Camp 25, Camp 26, Camp 27, Camp 28, Camp 29, Camp 30, Camp 31, Camp 32, Camp 33, Camp 34, Camp 35, Camp 36, Camp 37, Camp 38, Camp 39, Camp 40, Camp 41, Camp 42, Camp 43, Camp 44, Camp 45, Camp 46, Camp 47, Camp 48, Camp 49, Camp 50, Camp 51, Camp 52, Camp 53, Camp 54, Camp 55, Camp 56, Camp 57, Camp 58, Camp 59, Camp 60, Camp 61, Camp 62, Camp 63, Camp 64, Camp 65, Camp 66, Camp 67, Camp 68, Camp 69, Camp 70, Camp 71, Camp 72, Camp 73, Camp 74, Camp 75, Camp 76, Camp 77, Camp 78, Camp 79, Camp 80, Camp 81, Camp 82, Camp 83, Camp 84, Camp 85, Camp 86, Camp 87, Camp 88, Camp 89, Camp 90, Camp 91, Camp 92, Camp 93, Camp 94, Camp 95, Camp 96, Camp 97, Camp 98, Camp 99, Camp 100). The map also shows a vehicle track (dashed line) and a route taken (dotted line). A legend at the top indicates a scale of 0 to 15 km and symbols for road, vehicle track, and route taken. An inset map shows the location within Australia.

I awoke during the night. Wind and heavy rain were thrashing around us. Peter's modest prediction was right and I was surprised to witness such a rapid





change of conditions at sea level. It became a tent-bound morning as we slumbered away our day's intention of moving on to Interview River. I passed the final few hours of the day roaming, taking photographs and admiring a seagull rookery.

We decided to travel inland towards the Norfolk Range, leaving the Interview River and Pieman Heads for another time. Departing this magical land of coastline to venture back into the scrub was indeed uninspiring. We climbed over the dunes through scrub on to the plateau and looked back across our route of the past few days. We continued through the heathland, flushing out ground parrots as we approached the edge of Lagoon River ravine. Grant and I dropped briefly into the scrubby ravine but we found the setting unattractive and progress difficult. However, we eventually arrived at the base of the Norfolk Range in the late afternoon and decided to camp. We would tackle the range the following day. Peter had been on the range further to the north years before and recalled a hellish time through thick scrub. Grant and I decided that we would climb on to the open southern end of the range and perhaps venture further east to Mt Sunday.

We arrived on the ridge crest to find Mt Sunday isolated and distant, surrounded by uninviting scrub. It would be a full day's trip from here, and we suddenly lost interest in this minor peak to the south. To the east, stretching to the horizon, was a sea of rain forest. There stood the largest continuous tract of cool temperate rain forest wilderness in the country. The forests of Mt Vero and Savage River are 80 000 hectares of green magic, totally unprotected, and forgotten or ignored by all but the forest resource industries. I dreamt of a traverse through that area of giant myrtles, ferns and mist.

To the north along the range was Mt Norfolk, the highest peak. It appeared close enough to attempt provided the weather held out, so we continued along a gently undulating ridge crest until we descended to the scrub line. The nature of the exercise changed suddenly as we entered a barrier of thick scrub. After a few metres we retreated to reassess our proposed route. The saddle we intended to pursue was only 200 metres deep, but would take a lot of hard work to penetrate, so instead we decided to ascend the eastern ridge through dense rain forest, which brought us out on a higher ridge. The scrub was easier here, but it became thicker the closer we came to the peak.

Two hours later we reached a knoll, still two kilometres from the summit and with the scrub rapidly worsening. 'It's simply not worth it', I said to Grant, and he immediately agreed that we should retreat to the bottom of the range. As we reached the scrubby saddle below, I suggested that we bash straight down through it to an open ridge. The first few steps had me questioning my idea as we struck bauera-vine scrub of the worst kind. The only way to proceed was to throw yourself into it backwards, stand up, and repeat the task. At times it was easier either to crawl or to wrestle with the ti-tree traverse over the top. After an interminable time we emerged into the open, and vowed never to attempt such an insane route again. Back at camp we related our experiences to Peter, who looked neither envious nor surprised, and stated: 'To my knowledge the range has never been traversed, and it's not likely to be.'

The highlights of the trip were behind us, and I felt unenthusiastic about the long grind back to Balfour. We sidled



outwards beneath the range, trying to avoid the button-grass hop. The monotony was broken by the unstable weather, which created inky silhouettes of the sky-line. We crossed many scrubby creeks, which presented memorable obstacles. One in particular was well camouflaged by entangled vegetation. The opposite bank was visible only 100 metres away, but to reach it we had to descend through thick ti-tree and sword-grass for 100 metres, then bash up again through more bauera scrub. The following day we crossed the end of the range and walked along an old track to Balfour. I found myself thinking, questioning why such a wild and diverse area had never achieved National Park status. It is one of the last wild tracts of country in Australia with such diverse features as rain forest, mountains, rivers and coastline. It has taken two decades to build the momentum for a campaign to reserve this forgotten wilderness. Let's hope success comes soon. ■

*Ted Mead is an ardent conservationist, bushwalker and wilderness photographer. He has travelled and explored widely in his home State of Tasmania and elsewhere in Australia, New Zealand, South America and Asia.*



# A GENTLEMAN VISITS LAKE TALİ KARNG

Being a true tale of the expedition of Sir Leslie Fox-Stinks to the remote and mysterious Lake Tali Karng, as recorded by *Ted Endacott*

**S**aturday 7 March 1991

6.02 am. Woken by noisy ticking of clock as James steers the Bentley past Licola. Fax my mechanic to have clock attended to. Study sunrise photo of Lake Tali Karng. Hope that it will live up to my under-butler's description.

7.16 am. Car pulls into hired marquee at McFarlane Saddle one minute behind schedule. Admonish James for his inattention to punctuality. Am just in time to see my junior gardener leave. Note that he seems to be a fine peasant lad.



Sir Leslie and the vice-regal bicycle on Big Plain—definitely not Bentley territory! **Left**, the junior gardener arrives at the mysterious lake. **Right**, staff escort Sir Leslie and Lady Fox-Stinks to their lakeside accommodation. *Stephen Linton.* **Top right**, Sir Leslie and Sherka circumnavigate the lake. *Ted Endacott*

7.23 am. Remind Jeeves to tell Cook that a light breakfast will suffice, and that I plan to depart for the lake at eight o'clock precisely. Cook seems to mutter something about poor facilities, but gets to work at once.

8.29 am. Pause on my journey across Big Plain. Decide that it was unwise to have indulged in second helping of venison and squab at breakfast. Should

have made do with a few croissants. Note that under-butler was correct re the road being unsuited to the Bentley.

9.08 am. Make excellent time to the Sentinels overlooking lake. Ignore advice from insolent urchins (to ride north-west down spur) and follow road around to Riggall Hut site.

9.57 am. Junior gardener arrives at lake (three minutes early—must remember to give him a modest tip). Is set upon by curious school children who want to know why he is carrying 40 kilograms of garden tools. Poor lad has a hard time explaining that his master is coming. Claims sheltered site with a view.



10.17 am. Head gardener finally arrives at lake (17 minutes late—one just can't get good help these days). More curious secondary students cluster around, asking why he is carrying a marquee. Insolently suggest that 'the master' should carry his own tent. They must all have Marxist teachers.

10.30 am. Join Lady Fox-Stinks for light refreshments at top of Gillio Track. Cook still grumbling about facilities, but produces some most acceptable scones, muffins and pastries. Note that passing bushwalkers give us a number of rude stares. Begin to wonder whether a cravat would have been more appropriate for the day.

11.41 am. Arrive at lake with Lady Fox-Stinks. Staff escort us to our accommodation. Take offence at rude stares of local rabble. One accuses me of having brought my chattels in by helicopter. Poor fellow must be feeling the heat. Note that he (and many other holiday-makers) must have carried all his equipment on his own back. Touching enthusiasm!

11.49 am. Inspect our lakeside holiday apartment. Delightful prospect of the waters from front door. Feel some dismay at having to make do with a three-roomed tent, but furniture quite comfortable.



12.15 pm. Rest after an informal luncheon. Cook did well to have fresh bread ready for club sandwiches. Meal spoilt by mysterious loss of all three German whites. Butler insists that wine was placed in the lake to chill. He suspects some skinny-dipping nymphs nearby.

1.00 pm. Decide that a little exercise will be good for the staff. Take them all for a circumnavigation of the lake. Path very badly maintained.

1.46 pm. Rest briefly near Nigothoruk Creek. Amuse staff with music and song. Vital to keep their morale up. Probably should have remembered to provide a tent for them to sleep in.

2.05 pm. Decide to return to camp by water. Lady Fox-Stinks and Sherkas seem rather anxious for my safety. Remind them that Grandfather was an officer on the *Titanic*, and paddle off.

3.12 pm. Am gently woken by head Sherka, who dares to suggest that I dozed off for a while. No harm done as breeze has brought me back to camp again.

3.16 pm. Put Sherkas to work on the grounds. Have tennis court prepared and marquee environs spruced up. Call a halt to all this when tea is served. Compliment Jeeves on his punctuality.





'3.16 pm. Put Sherkas to work on the grounds.' Endacott. **Top**, silver service: Cook looks on as Sir Leslie tucks into dinner—no doubt musing on 'the simple life-style'. Linton

3.39 pm. Indulge in a brief nap, possibly brought on by a surfeit of brandy-snaps, meringues and éclairs. Must remember to show restraint in front of the staff.

4.00 pm. Am joined by Lady Fox-Stinks for a spot of tennis. Servants applaud each hit politely. Must offer them some supplies for their evening meal.

7.00 pm. Cook excels herself with dinner. Personally pass on my congratulations for the terrine of fresh mountain trout. Hardly notice that menu is restricted to seven courses. Wine is chilled to perfection. Butler was forced to monitor nymphs all afternoon to prevent further thefts.

7.56 pm. Ask Jeeves to investigate uproar in kitchen tent. He finds Cook struggling with a pilfering bushwalker. Offender claims to be starving. Jeeves notices that villain has broached last

bottle of Chateau Laffite. Cook salvages situation by taking thief's credit card, then feeding him all the leftovers.

Sunday 8 March 1991

6.03 am. Send first wave of porters back to vehicles. Note whinges and grumbles as they hit steep sections. Young people these days have no stamina!

7.30 am. Partake of breakfast exactly on time. Cook seems to be more at home with the facilities. Almost run out of marmalade! Lady Fox-Stinks not impressed with sauce for smoked fish. Fortify myself for the walk out by nibbling at one last crêpe.

10.08 am. Make good progress up to Echo Point and take in the views. Remind piano carriers to send for my bicycle. Rest until it is brought to me.

11.00 am. Take morning tea, change into formal cycling clothes. Make excellent speed over plains near Spion Kopje.

11.39 am. Energy levels drop as I approach Dunsmuir Huts. Drain hip-flask and call for junior gardener to tow me until we are in sight of McFarlane Saddle. Manage last section in fine style, to cheers of the servants. Hurry back in the Bentley as Vicar has asked me to preach at evensong on theme of 'Servanthood'. Hope he won't mind if I change topic to 'Simple life-style', given all that I have learned from this weekend. ■

*Ted Endacott has explored and photographed wilderness areas in Australia and overseas. His interest in bushwalking led to Li-Loing, rafting, ski touring, and a number of elaborate outdoor practical jokes. He has worked as a secondary teacher and as a camps organizer.*



A full-page photograph of a person wearing a hat and a backpack, walking along a narrow, light-colored rock path in a deep canyon. The canyon walls are made of layered, reddish-brown rock and are covered with sparse green vegetation. The lighting is bright, creating strong shadows and highlights on the rock surfaces.

WILD CONSERVATION

# G**UIDEBOOKS**

A case against, by *Martin Hawes*



As if bulldozers and chain-saws weren't enough, in recent years we have seen the emergence of an insidious new threat to Australia's wilderness. Every year thousands of unsuspecting bushwalkers carry it into the wilderness. And every year it takes an additional toll of Australia's fragile wilderness resource. *Phytophthora cinnamomi*? *Giardia*? No, I am talking about the ubiquitous guidebook.

Perhaps I am being overly dramatic, but guidebooks and track notes can be detrimental to wilderness values in several ways. And it seems to me that the only way to get around this problem (book-burning being frowned upon these days) is for guidebook authors to agree on a code of ethics about what sort of information is acceptable in guidebooks and what is better left unwritten.

Let me say at the outset that guidebooks can be of use. A well-written guidebook not only makes it easier to get from A to B but can also enhance the journey by providing interesting facts and anecdotes about the features one encounters along the way. And guidebooks can make the task of wilderness managers easier by encouraging users to stay in particular areas, use particular campsites, observe the rules of minimal-impact bushwalking, and so forth.

On the other hand, guidebooks can work against the interests of wilderness management if they contain the wrong sort of advice or information. And I would argue that for many routes in wilderness areas the right sort of information is minimal information—or none at all.

Wilderness, by definition, is hard to get to. Make it easy to get to and it's no longer wilderness. The wilderness traveller is obliged to make an effort, to put up with a certain amount of discomfort and rely on his or her resources. The remoteness of wilderness is the crucial element which makes it possible to 'stand with one's senses steeped in nature', far from the distractions of the modern world.

Yet one of the main functions of a guidebook is to make access to wilderness easier. It tells you how to get from A to B with a minimum of effort. So the publication of a guidebook can degrade wilderness values just as effectively as extending a roadhead or upgrading a walking track. If the area concerned is already substantially developed, the loss of remoteness may be negligible. But if the area is one which has hitherto remained trackless and little known, the damage to wilderness values can be considerable.

The mere fact that a route description exists can subtly degrade the wilderness quality of an area because it robs it of some of its mystery. And the concept of mystery should not be dismissed as mere romantic fancy. Life itself is inherently mysterious, and we lose sight of this fact at our peril. Wilderness is one place left



In a well-loved wilderness: Sue Baxter negotiates a section of Tasmania's South Coast Track. Chris Baxter. Right, canyons in Bell Creek in the sandstone country of the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. David Noble. Previous page, Jose Alfonso is dwarfed by the walls of Edeowie Gorge, Wilpena Pound, South Australia. David Rowe

on earth where mystery abounds. Wilderness is the proverbial blank spot on the map; it is a place where one has the opportunity to explore, discover, have an adventure, and every once in a while—why not?—get lost. In a world where so much has become mechanical and predictable, and where almost everything seems to have been explained

and categorized, wilderness represents a reservoir of the mysterious, the unknown—a reservoir from which human beings can draw refreshment and inspiration. The more wilderness gets mapped and catalogued, the harder it becomes to enjoy the element of uncertainty which is an essential dimension of the 'wilderness experience'. When a guidebook to a previously little known area is published, it is a bit like being told the crucial part of a novel you are about to read: it can spoil the whole story. In an age of microchip information and satellite photography, any attempt to preserve the mystery of wilderness might seem doomed to



failure. We are going to have to take extraordinary measures if we want to preserve our wilderness. Perhaps we should literally leave a few blank spots on the maps, just as there were in the good old days!

Guidebooks encourage more people to use the tracks or routes they describe, and that's not always a good thing. The inclusion of the South-west Cape circuit in a guidebook published in the early 1980s is almost certainly one of the main reasons visitor numbers in that area have escalated in recent years.

What's wrong with encouraging people to go into wilderness areas? Nothing, if the areas concerned are already fairly developed and are not at risk from recreational impacts. But if a guidebook swells annual visitor numbers from several dozen to several hundred, the damage to wilderness values can be dramatic.

Increased use means increased impacts and fewer opportunities to experience solitude. Moreover, tracks will inevitably start to appear once usage levels are sufficiently high. The proliferation of tracks impairs wilderness values and can hasten the erosion of the landscape itself. Tasmania's Western Arthur Range is a case in point: scarcely touched until the 1960s, parts of the range are now literally crumbling under the impact of upward of 600 visitors a year. In such areas the only solution may be to restrict visitor numbers. And because much of the western Tasmanian environment is extremely fragile, usage may have to be kept as low as a few dozen parties a year on some routes. The publication of guidebooks is thus not only unnecessary, it seriously hinders the proper management of the areas concerned.

Nor is a guidebook necessarily an aid to safe and easy travel in wilderness areas. In fact it can work the other way: the introduction of 'props' into wilderness tends to encourage inexperienced people who are more likely to get into difficulties. I pity the poor bugger who tries to head south from Pindars Peak in Tasmania's Southern Ranges following the route shown in one of the major guidebooks. I know of only one person who has attempted the route, a highly experienced bushwalker, who spent three days bashing his way down to the south coast through labyrinths of horrendous scrub.

And what of the walker who was discovered by a friend of mine, nose deep in a guidebook, heading out along the wrong ridge in search of Federation Peak, while the peak itself—for once free of cloud—towered over all else around! One wonders how that person would have fared if a southerly front had swept in two hours later and brought two weeks of torrential rain and snow. Like huts, guidebooks tend to discourage self-reliance, and self-reliance and experience are by far the best insurance

policies in wilderness when the going gets tough and dangerous.

Some people may feel that restricting the publication of track notes is a form of elitism which discriminates against less experienced walkers. This is a variation of the argument that wilderness itself is elitist because only a small number of people can ever go there. It's rather odd that people complain about the elitism of wilderness but never about the elitism of, say, the Olympic Games. In fact, most Australians have the opportunity to experience wilderness directly if they are prepared to make the effort. (Most people don't want to or can't be bothered, but that's a matter of choice, not elitism.) The argument that wilderness areas should be 'opened up' with roads for the benefit of all and sundry can be countered by pointing out that the more you develop wilderness and make it accessible, the more you destroy the very values that distinguish it as wilderness. And the publication of a guidebook is itself a subtle form of development.

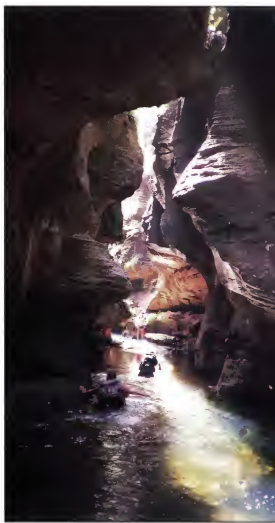
What about the question of rights—freedom of the press and all that? It might be argued that there is a consumer demand for guidebooks and that people have a right to use them. Freedom of the press is a right that should not be lightly set aside; but the question of rights becomes two-edged if wilderness values are being compromised to the detriment of society as a whole. Indeed, the argument that the individual has a 'right' to publish a guidebook ultimately has no more validity than the argument that a logging or mining company has a 'right' to exploit a wilderness area. The degree of environmental damage may differ but the principle is the same.

In any case, no one is talking about banning guidebooks or forcing guidebook publishers out of business. Rather, it is to be hoped that a code of ethics can be agreed upon through a process of consultation.

During the past two years the Tasmanian Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage has employed a full-time research officer to prepare a walking-track management plan for the entire Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. At the time of writing, the plan is in the final stages of preparation and will soon be available for public comment. A key recommendation of the plan is the adoption of a track classification scheme specifying standards for track development, usage levels and recreational impacts for all tracks and routes in the WHA. (The South Coast Track, for example, would receive a different classification to, say, the Western Arthurs or, perhaps, the Overland Track.)

In particular, the scheme includes guidelines specifying the amount of publicity appropriate for each category and the amount of detail which should be included in route descriptions. For highly developed tracks such as the

Overland Track there will be few restrictions, whereas for mere routes and for the lowest grade of track it is recommended that publicity be minimal and that no guidebooks be published. For medium grade tracks, guidebooks would be acceptable but it is recommended that the level of detail be restricted. The department will draw up sample route descriptions for tracks in each category to give authors a clear idea of the level of detail it considers acceptable.



To ensure that the advice and information contained in guidebooks is consistent with management policy, prospective guidebook authors will be encouraged to work in close consultation with the department while preparing future publications. This process of consultation is already under way, and it is hoped that in the near future a policy can be agreed upon that will satisfy all parties—and, more importantly, will help to ensure the protection of wilderness values in Australia. ■

*Martin Hawes has walked extensively in the Tasmanian wilderness and has worked since 1978 as a wilderness photographer. His book *Above Me Only Sky* was published in 1981, and an exhibition of his photographs appeared in Hobart during 1990. He was a campaign director for the Wilderness Society in Tasmania in 1984, a co-author of the 1985 report *Wilderness Assessment and Management*, and was a witness at the Helsham Inquiry into Tasmania's Lomonthyme and Southern Forests. Lately he has worked for the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage, preparing a track management plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.*



# GREG MORTIMER

Australian Himalayan mountaineering's unsung hero—a profile  
by *Lincoln Hall*





**F**ootholds broke away from the cliff as I heaved myself over the final bulge. Greg Mortimer was hunched down out of the wind, his face hidden by his glacier glasses and the hood of his wind suit. I collapsed beside him and gasped desperately for what little oxygen was left in the air. The South Face of Annapurna II had saved its hardest pitch until the very end.

'A 200 metre snow slope to the top', Greg said, shoving his hands in his armpits to warm them. 'But it's getting late. We don't want to spend the night on the summit.'

'Let's do it tomorrow', I panted. I didn't feel that it would be safe to head for the summit so late in the afternoon.

'What d'you mean?' he asked, incredulous.

'Go down.' The thin air made me ration my words. 'All of us go for it tomorrow.'

'No! We're so close...'

I was startled by his vehemence. Quickly I reminded Greg that Andy was in the chimney 40 metres beneath us and Tim was huddled on a ledge another 30 metres lower, forced to abandon climbing for the day by sudden, worrying blackouts.

'Look', I continued, knowing that I had to convince him. 'It'll take two hours for all of us to Jumar back up to here tomorrow if we fix the rope, but if we go on now, none of us will get back to camp tonight.'

'Camp' was a polite term for the most ridiculous place in which any of us had ever spent a night—a short, steep gully, full of snow only deep enough to scrape out places to sit, with the lowlands of Nepal 7000 metres below. Yet we needed to get back there to the life-giving warmth of our sleeping bags and our last few precious cartridges of fuel.

I pressed the point. 'If the weather changes while we're still up here, that's the end of the story.'

Greg was silent. I concentrated on my breathing.

'Okay', he said. 'Let's go down.'

Eight years later, Greg still considers the rock pitches near the 7937 metre summit of Annapurna II to be the hardest he has climbed. Harder than the vital pitch he led on the North Face of Mt Everest, harder than the North Ridge of K2. Difficulty is much more than an equation of steepness, altitude and weather. For Greg, difficult situations are those in which his mind pushes beyond its boundaries so that he can redefine what is possible. He took me with him through that barrier on Annapurna II, until I felt the need to rein him in and steer us back to safer ground.

My first alpine climb with Greg was almost enough to make me abandon mountaineering for ever. In 1976 the

Back at Rongbuk Base Camp after the historic first Australian ascent of Mt Everest in 1984, Greg Mortimer's face shows the strain of high-altitude mountaineering without supplementary oxygen. *Lincoln Hall. Left, Mortimer amidst a white wilderness, near the summit of Mt Minto, Antarctica, on the first ascent. Jonathan Chester*





peaks of the Mt Cook area in New Zealand appeared gargantuan and impossible. Avalanches, crevasses and blizzards lurked behind every ridge, waiting to pounce on me. I teamed up with Greg for an ascent of Malte Brun—a favourite with Australians because it is predominantly a rockclimb. However, we decided our route should be Fyfe's Couloir, a narrow ribbon of not-so-steep ice which led almost directly to Malte's summit. I followed Greg's confident footsteps up the glacier. He agreed to rope up after the bergschrund collapsed, leaving me dangling from my ice axe above the horrendous depths of the crevasse. An hour or two later, after we had taken in the superb view from the summit, it was time to descend. I led the way along the jagged summit ridge, while Greg had the difficult job of keeping the rope from snagging as I wound my way around, between and over boulders. He soon gave up in frustration and coiled the rope, stating that the normal route was reputedly easy and that he'd get the rope out of his pack when we needed it. He never did. He rushed ahead with frightening speed, scrambling down steep rock faces and reversing the notorious *à cheval* ridge as though death were not the consequence of a slip.

I tried to keep up, but he was soon out of sight. I stuck my head over a 50 metre cliff to see him waiting on a wide ledge below. 'People usually abseil', he called up, 'but it's quicker to down-climb'. Then he was away again. I lowered myself over the edge and trembled my way down, cursing Greg, the rock, and my stupidity in coming to New Zealand. The climbing below the cliff was easier, but when I reached the glacier, I became convinced that it was full of hidden crevasses like the one which had almost swallowed me at dawn.

Finally I staggered back to the hut, worn out from adrenalin overdose, ready to tell Greg where he could shove his mountaineering. He was sitting in the sun outside the hut. When he heard me stumbling over the boulders, he turned to look at me with an enormous smile, full of the joy of the climb, full of the joy of life. His mood extinguished my anger and left me merely exhausted. Greg showed me that the risks in mountaineering are far greater than those in rockclimbing, but that they can be managed. After Malte Brun I tackled mountains in a different frame of mind, so that even much more difficult climbs never seemed quite as hard.

I am sure Greg has left a trail of climbing partners around the world similarly shattered while he moves on to the next climb. I think he used to believe—and may still—that everyone climbed as he did, finely balanced on the edge between death and ecstasy, relishing the view outwards at the world and inwards at the workings of the mind. His



Mortimer and author Lincoln Hall in February 1988, happy to set foot in Antarctica on their way to Mt Minto—after a month at sea aboard the schooner *Allan* and *VI Thistlethwayte*. Chester. **Right.** Mortimer in 1983, emaciated after the prolonged descent from Annapurna II. *Hal*

many solo climbs in New Zealand, in the Dolomites and on local rock reveal his fascination for carefully weighing the dice, then committing everything to the roll.

When you meet him, you notice his freckles, a face always ready to smile, and ginger hair which he only occasionally remembers to brush. The only clue to his intensity is in his piercing blue eyes. Otherwise he is affable, much more ready to listen to someone else than to talk about himself. That is logical for Greg because he sees that everyone has something to offer—something more than his own experiences have already

taught him. On rock or ice, his whole being becomes charged with potential energy, giving him the alertness of a cat.

His enduring climbing partnerships have been with people who shared his talents. Notable among them is Keith Bell, with whom he made many of his most memorable rockclimbs during the 1970s. These included first ascents on the cliffs of the Blue Mountains and on the dramatic rock faces and spires of the Warrumbungles, but their most spectacular success was the first traverse of Balls Pyramid in 1973.

The Pyramid is a huge blade poking up 600 metres out of the Pacific Ocean, 25 kilometres south-east of Lord Howe Island. When seen from Lord Howe, it appears triangular (hence the name) but in fact it is like a huge dinner plate of rock, with a vertical western face, a slightly less steep eastern face, and the



rim of the plate forming ridges to the north and south. At the end of February, a fishing boat dropped Greg and Keith off on the small rock platform at the base of the South Ridge. Their climb to the summit took a day and a half without incident. The descent was a different story.

The North Ridge dropped in a series of steps, and it was during difficult climbing along one of the horizontal sections that Cyclone Kirsty arrived. Mist and rain and strong winds made the climbing hard and dangerous. The gale took hold of the ropes every time the two men tried to set up an abseil or to retrieve their ropes afterwards. They ended up huddling in a small cave, watching sea birds battle the winds as they tried to join Greg and Keith in the cave. Only a few were lucky enough to avoid being dashed against the rock. From the security of the cave the climbers stared in awe at a series of huge waterspouts which sucked birds from the cliff and dropped their dead and broken bodies into the ocean. Three days later, the seas subsided sufficiently for a fishing boat to approach from Lord Howe, but the climbers had to swim for the boat, leaving everything behind—even their boots.

This ability to detach themselves from their material possessions stood Keith and Greg in good stead again when they returned to Lord Howe Island in 1977. Their objective was the huge, unclimbed South Face of Mt Gower on the island itself. Again they were deposited at the base of the cliff by boat, but this time the steep, rotten rock defeated them after only four or five frightening pitches. They abseiled back to their rock ledge, where there was no choice but to swim across a 300 metre wide bay. The might of the whole ocean seemed to be focused on the rocky shores. After two hours of

watching the waves pounding against the rocks, Keith threw himself in. Greg followed immediately, preferring mate-ship to a lonely death by starvation or dehydration. A current drew them in against the cliff, then let them out again. Eventually, they dragged themselves out on the rocks, then wandered into the village wearing nothing but their under-pants.

Greg found another partner in John Fantini, a climbing dynamo and a legendary figure in climbing circles. Together with New Zealanders Noel and Mary Sissons, John and Greg spent a successful season in the Peruvian Andes in 1980. As a foursome they made what was probably the third ascent of Pirá-

mide (5885 metres), in the Cordillera Blanca range, one of the most attractive and difficult of Peru's ice peaks. John, Noel and Greg attempted the unclimbed North Face of Chacaraju (6112 metres), and bivouacked a third of the way up, under a 200 metre high vertical wall. Football-sized rocks bounced around them, prompting them to retreat from the Cordillera Blanca to the nearby mountains of the Cordillera Huayhuash. Here the team of four climbed the West Face of Yerupajá (6637 metres), Peru's second-highest peak.

With this success under their belts, Noel and Greg returned to Chacaraju, this time to a new route on the South Face. Greg led up past Noel for the final



## Greg Mortimer—Climbing Chronology

**1966** Started rockclimbing in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, at age 13.

**1970** First 'expedition' to Mt Geryon, Tasmania.

**1970-80** Many climbs, including first ascents, in the Blue Mountains, Wolgan Valley and the Warrumbungles, New South Wales.

**New Zealand.** Many routes in Mt Cook area, including solo winter ascent, MacInnes Ridge of Nazomi.

**1973** First traverse of Balls Pyramid, near Lord Howe Island.

**1975-76** Europe. North Faces of Dru, Courtes, Piz Badile; West Face of Petites Jorasses; Gervassutti Pillar of Mont Blanc du Tacul; Central Pillar of Fréney; many routes in the Dolomites including North Faces of Cletiva, Cima Grande, solo of West Pillar of Cima Grande; solo of North Face of Calpe, Spain.

**Africa.** Diamond Couloir on Mt Kenya; many new routes in Kenya (including climbs up to grade 23 at Hells Gate).

**USA.** Yosemite Valley, California. The Nose, El Capitan, in two days.

**1977** Unsuccessful attempt on South Face of Mt Gower, Lord Howe Island.

**1979** New Zealand. New route, Hidden Ballour Face of Mt Tasman.

**1980** Peru. First ascents of South Face of Chacaraju, South-east Face of Artesonraju, East Face of Kakakuri; ascents of South-West Face of Pirámide, West Face of Yerupajá.

**1982** New Zealand. First winter ascent, East Ridge of Mt Cook.

**1983** Nepal. First ascent, South Face of Annapurna II.

**1984** China. First ascent of Great Couloir, North Face of Mt Everest (without oxygen equipment).

**1985-87** Nepal. Guided ascents of Chulu West and Island Peak.

**1987** Climb of Sydney's Centrepoint Tower (Greenpeace action protesting against nuclear-powered/armed ships in Pacific).

**1988** Antarctica. First ascent of Mt Minto; first Australian ascent of Vinson Massif, Antarctica's highest peak; and new route on nearby Mt Shin.

**1990** China. First Australian ascent of K2 (world's second-highest peak) by North Ridge without oxygen equipment.

First ascent, East Face of Sydney Opera House (Greenpeace action against ozone depletion). ■

pitch of the climb, and as he reached the summit ridge, the fragile tower of ice disintegrated, sending him hurtling 90 metres through space. He came to his senses on the end of the rope, vaguely aware of blood and pain, and of Noel frantically calling his name. His most serious injury was a broken collar-bone. Luckily, Noel was able to rig up their second rope for abseiling. Greg would surely have died otherwise—and there never would have been that now familiar photograph, taken by Tim Macartney-Snape four years later, of Greg kneeling on the summit of Mt Everest at sunset. The story of the Australian route on Everest (8872 metres), climbed without supplementary oxygen, has been told in *Wild* (a sponsor of the expedition), in a television documentary, in a book, and in magazines ranging from *Dolly* to *Penthouse*. Mt Everest is a special symbol for the public at large; though mountaineers acknowledge the attraction of the highest point on Earth, they are well





Mortimer (right) with Andy Henderson and Tim Macartney-Snape on the summit of Annapurna II after climbing a difficult new route on the South Face in 1983. *Hall*

aware that many other peaks offer greater challenges. For Greg there was more satisfaction in the climb in 1988 of Antarctica's Mt Minto, the highest peak in an area so remote that it made Everest Base Camp look like Saturday morning at the supermarket. Greg conceived and planned the first ascent of Mt Minto, and saw that all six climbers on the team reached the summit, and returned safely. The climbing there was less challenging and less dangerous than on Everest, but the joy of opening up a new frontier was immense.

In 1990, the North Ridge of K2 (8611 metres), the world's second-highest peak, offered the chance to cover some rarely trodden ground. The approach taken by the joint Australian-American expedition passed through parts of China still marked with blank sections on maps. Their route on the mountain had been climbed first by a giant Japanese expedition using bottled oxygen. The challenge for the four Australian and three American climbers was to repeat

that route with a much smaller team and without oxygen equipment. Success came when Greg reached the summit with Greg Child and American Steve Swenson after a 20-hour summit day. Greg Mortimer thus became one of only three or four people to have climbed the two highest peaks in the world without supplementary oxygen (Greg could not tell me the precise number; statistics have never mattered to him).

This is a pastiche of Greg's climbing experiences. When you talk to Greg Mortimer—and I've spent a lot of time doing that over the last ten years—stories such as those related here pop up only rarely, because the past has little relevance for him. I've made no mention of his climbs in Africa, in Europe, in California's Yosemite Valley. Australia, where he has been climbing for 25 years, doesn't get much of a look-in either. I'm also sorry to leave out the stories of travelling rough in South America and Africa—tales of headless bodies in the back of a truck, and of train carriages so full of soot and smoke that he couldn't see the floor. But for the record, Greg is a geologist whose work has taken him to the most rugged parts of Australia, New

Zealand and Antarctica. These days he leads adventurous treks and has recently become a partner in a company offering training courses in management and leadership using the outdoor arena. Greg spends his summers on cruise ships to Antarctica, lecturing on geology, pushing the World Park message—and, when he's lucky, squeezing in a climb.

The portrait of Greg Mortimer is one of a skilled, courageous and dedicated mountaineer, someone who uses mountains to link together adventures, ideas, friendships. There remains, of course, the eternal question: why? The answer is simple. Greg Mortimer's true gift is his ability to be totally in the here and now, taking notice of the 'what-ifs' and 'maybes' only to the extent they impinge on his current circumstances. Such an ability to focus on the immediate is handy at any time, but in hard-core climbing it is essential. Greg doesn't see himself as somebody special. Climbing is something he likes to do, something he is good at. That is enough. ■

*Lincoln Hall is a well-known climber and writer. He is author of *White Limbo*, an account of the first Australian ascent of Mt Everest, and of *The Loneliest Mountain*, which tells of the first ascent of Mt Minto, in Antarctica. At present he is working on a book about Greg Mortimer's climbing life.*



# SKIING ANTARCTICA

True wilderness skiing, by *Richard Thwaites*



Saturday 7 April, 111°08'E 70°02'S, 520 kilometres south of Casey.

Cold and windy, about -40°C, cloudy, blowing, too much drift to wear goggles, completely frosted in less than a minute, so had to combat the wind and drift with bare eyes to be able to see, icicles growing on the face, lashes frosting, white and sugar coated, then freezing together...

**A**ntarctica is an inhospitable place, with extreme cold, high winds and isolation. Many people could not understand my desire to spend a winter there...

Most of the continent of Antarctica consists of a giant sheet of ice, over 5000 kilometres across, rising more than 3000 metres above sea level, and in part over 4000 metres thick. The most striking feature of this Antarctic Plateau is that it continues for thousands of kilometres in a great, featureless, white expanse, scoured by constant winds and unbroken by rock outcrops, mountains or valleys.

As a member of the 1984 Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE), I spent 15 months based at Casey Station. My job as expeditioner-glaciologist was to run a series of field

The gentle face of Antarctic ski touring. Two residents of Casey Station enjoy a sunny midsummer evening's skiing beside nearby O'Briens Bay. All photos Richard Thwaites

expeditions during which basic measurements of the ice sheet and meteorological conditions were made. With four expeditions between one and four months in duration, I was fortunate to spend more time travelling across the ice sheet than on the station.

Casey Station sits on a rocky peninsula on the Antarctic coastline, only a few kilometres from the edge of the ice sheet and approximately 3500 kilometres



south of Perth. Though much of the edge of the Antarctic continent consists of sheer ice cliffs, with ice shelves or glaciers breaking straight off into the ocean, Casey sits among rocky islands and peninsulas with beautiful views of the surrounding coastline.

The lower slopes of the Law Dome, a subsidiary of the main ice sheet, occupy the whole of the eastern vista, a great white shadow looming over the landscape. Across Newcombe Bay to the north, on the Clarke Peninsula, lie the ruins of Wilkes Station, half buried in ice, with the outlines of numerous grounded icebergs visible behind. To the west, out to sea, are a number of small, rocky islands—some capped with ice—and more icebergs. These are of all sizes: large tabular bergs, their flat tops sometimes more than 30 metres above the ocean; smaller bergs eroded into fantastic shapes with tunnels, columns and arches. Behind the station lie the rocky hills of the Bailey Peninsula, with views to the south of a series of bays and headlands, dwarfed by the white shape of the ice sheet sweeping away into the distance.

Skiing seemed to be the natural way to see and experience some portion of what Antarctica has to offer. An understanding of our true situation—the space surrounding us, the great beauty and power of the continent, the isolation—could only be gained by escaping the comforts of the station, the grubbiness of its surroundings, and the constant throb of the generators. As a recreational activity, skiing gave me some much-needed physical exercise in an otherwise fairly sedentary life-style.

The face of Antarctica changes completely from summer to winter, with huge variations in temperatures, daylight hours and winds; and so the skiing conditions, too, vary greatly during the year.

Winter is a period of extended blizzards, long hours of darkness—and a peculiar confusion of the internal biological clock which makes it very difficult to get to sleep and equally difficult to wake up again.

Casey Station, north of the Antarctic Circle, never experiences 24-hour darkness but has a brief period of daylight even on the shortest day of the year. Any skiing in winter is limited to these few hours—and, naturally, to days when the winds are light and the visibility good. With the sun skimming the horizon it can be very cold, and there is always the danger of a sudden blizzard. The strong winds of a blizzard are thick with snow drift, and within a few minutes a calm, clear day can turn into a howling pea-souper with visibility of only a metre or so. Blizzards can last for days, even weeks, so it is better not to be caught out in one.

Any ski trip in winter tends to become a small expedition. The dangers of the

Skiing the spectacular Antarctic coastline in summer. **Right**, on a trip round the coast to the Petersen Glacier, south of Casey. The winter snows have melted, leaving a surface of blue ice for much of the way.

environment make it necessary to carry emergency survival equipment and a radio wherever you go. The sea ice offers a perfect skiing surface to explore the coastline, giving access to islands and bays that are cut off at other times of the year. It is possible to ski on the sea ice around the base of ice cliffs, spectacular waves frozen in the process of breaking, and even to some icebergs grounded close to shore. In places, snow drifts form ramps on to the tops of the cliffs—a necessary escape route, since near Casey sudden blizzards can often blow the sea ice away.

Midsummer is a time of 24 hours of daylight. With the sun setting only briefly and skimming along just beneath the southern horizon, the midnight hours are often bathed in a delicious twilight glow.

As in winter, my internal biological clock was greatly affected by changes in the length of the day. I became hyperactive and found that if the weather was fine and the sun was out, I

could work and ski long hours, needing little sleep. On a couple of occasions I skied much of the night, only retiring to bed well after the sun was climbing again.

In summer there are long periods when the days are sunny and the weather fairly calm. Blizzards, when they come, are likely not to last as long or be as intense as in winter. A large amount of melting takes place around much of the coast in summer; the winter snows are stripped off, back to rock or blue ice in places. This results in variable skiing conditions, with blue ice, melting slush and soft snow all present on one slope. Sometimes the cloud rolls in, and with hardly a breath of wind, snow falls, large, dry flakes settling in a powdery layer, to remain until the next wind picks it up again. There may only be a few hours between snowfall and wind; or a few days may pass, a time for some delightful skiing around the coast.

As a glaciologist, I spent most of my time away from the station and the coast, on expeditions on to the ice sheet. We were not trying to follow 'in the footsteps of Mawson' or attempt any heroic physical deeds. Our main means of transport were lumbering Caterpillar D5







bulldozers, similar to normal earth-moving equipment but specially altered for the Antarctic conditions. These dozers towed sleds with all our food, fuel, emergency supplies, our living

quarters and electrical generating equipment.

Our cramped living conditions and the harsh environment made it even more important to escape occasionally—to get some exercise, to be alone. Skiing was not easy on the Antarctic Plateau. The wind-carved sastrugi—irregular ridges of ice as hard as cement, which cover most of the surface—made it impossible to stride out in any sort of rhythm. It was more like a clamber over a sharp peak, a few strides, then step and clamber again. Skiing in temperatures as low as  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ , the body was always well covered, exposed skin was in danger of freezing and, with a little unaccustomed exercise, the inner layer of clothing was soon soaked in sweat. Anywhere this sweat reached the outside air, it immediately froze, turning a woollen balaclava, for

some power of nature at its most furious; between the liveliness of the coast during the summer, with its plentiful wildlife and changing scenery, and the endless, sterile expanse of the Antarctic Plateau. After ten days of blizzard conditions, with cold temperatures and high winds laden with snow drift, there is nothing to be done but endure. Then the wind drops, the sky clears, and there is a feeling of well-being, of euphoria, as crystalline light bathes the still, silent landscape.

Tuesday 3 April,  $111^{\circ}08'\text{E}$   $70^{\circ}02'\text{S}$ , 520 kilometres south of Casey.

To the west, into the dimming sunset, the sky was brilliant-hued; pink, red, orange, yellow and mauve—reflecting off small clouds. The snow beneath was deep blue, with some of these colours streaked across



## Antarctica



example, into a solid mask frozen to the beard, and often difficult and painful to remove.

Despite these problems, skiing on the Antarctic Plateau is quite an experience. On a still day the silence is complete, broken only by the noise of skis in the snow, the creak of leather boots, and the rasping of breath freezing as it meets the cold air. After travelling for months across an unchanging landscape, I would find myself, a tiny speck on a spotless white infinity, enclosed by a blue dome sky. Stop, and listen. Nothing. No birds. No wind in the trees. No distant freeways. Just the roaring silence. Then the rasping, crackling of breath, tiny pinpoints of light around the face.

Antarctica is an extraordinarily beautiful place, a place of grand scenery and enormous scale. It's a place of contrasts, between this benign beauty and the awe-

it. To the east the sky was darker than the snow: the sky dark blue-grey, deep; the snow reflecting the pinks and reds of the sky back to the west. Quite a fantastic and surreal scene, colours floating without shape. I stood there in the dimming rainbow evening, surrounded by space, nothing around me, floating, floating in a sea of colour. Expand, fill the space, take it all in, experience it, because you'll soon forget what it really felt like. I stood there watching and thinking as I floated, desperately trying to make it a part of me, something that I could not forget. Even the cold,  $-37^{\circ}\text{C}$ , did not seem to bother me. ■

*Richard Thwaites trained as a geologist and worked as a glaciologist for some years with the Australian Antarctic Division, spending three periods in Antarctica between 1981 and 1986. An exhibition of his photographs of Antarctica has been travelling, since 1988, to such places as Parliament House, Canberra; Villa del Mar, Chile; the Australian Embassy in Washington, DC and the State Bank Galleria, Melbourne. His article 'Why Save Antarctica?' appeared in Wildfowl 42.*



# S SOLOMON SOJOURN

Paddling in paradise, with *Wade Fairley*







As a student at Dunedin in New Zealand's cold south, I met a Solomon Islander. I had spent the previous year in the tropics, sailing a dug-out canoe in the south of the Philippines, and had become infatuated with the tropics and the many exciting islands on the Earth's equatorial girth. Dunedin winters are long, wet and cold, and the stories he told me of his island homeland while we sat ruggid up in crowded, stuffy lecture theatres had a great impact on me. The following year I returned home to Australia, discovered sea kayaks and quickly made plans to paddle the Solomon Islands.

Mik, a friend with whom I worked as a rafting guide, joined in on the plans and we chose March as the month for our departure. March matches the onset of cooler weather, and the south-east winds that blow lightly and reliably begin at that time of year.

Mik loaded our Greenlander kayaks into a container in Melbourne and shipped them to Honiara, the Solomons' capital. Delivery would take a month, so we timed our arrival by air to match the ship's arrival in port. Getting our unusual craft through Customs was a little dramatic. The guidelines drawn up by the British in colonial times made no provision for such vessels. At first, the two kayaks were classified as 'Ships beneath 120 tonnes', which would have necessitated payment of a huge deposit, but we managed to persuade the officials that the more appropriate category would be 'House boat'; the small deposit required was promptly returned to us when we shipped the kayaks back to Australia six months later. We ran up against a similar complication when we explained our plan to paddle about the country to the Immigration Department, but this, too, was overcome after a few anxious days.

We paddled out of Honiara watched by a large crowd. The previous afternoon we had given a short radio interview, and people on their way to work in Honiara were curious to see our shining, new canoes. The islands' broadcasting ser-

vice, Radio Happy Isles, is received in most villages, and by giving the interview I had hoped to explain our presence; the simple idea that we wished to see the Solomon Islands and meet



Time out from paradise: Michael Jowett takes to a swamp in search of flying foxes. The plant, animal and marine life of the Solomon Islands are prolific. **Left**, paddling past a small island in Manning Strait, between Santa Isabel and Larau. All photos Wade Fairley

people. I thought this would reduce the mystery surrounding our voyage and eliminate the need for continual explanations. Unfortunately, the reverse occurred, and the story that was broadcast created even more confusion. It gave the inaccurate impression that we intended to leave Honiara, head to sea,



and disappear over the horizon, paddling non-stop to Australia. It took two or three months for this rumour to die, but until then, everyone we met assumed that we were taking a quick break before embarking for Australia, thousands of kilometres away across open water.

Honiara is on the island of Guadalcanal. We paddled eastwards from the small capital to a peninsula which extends to within 30 kilometres of a much smaller island group to the north, named Nggela, or the Florida Group. We made the crossing in the hours either side of dawn to avoid the heat and the brisk winds that spring up with the warmed air.

Nggela consists of a multitude of small islets and two large islands separated by a narrow, deep channel, the Boli Passage. There are passages of this type throughout the Solomons and they make spectacular paddling. Meandering and confined, they have the feel of a great river; only the varieties of fish—trevally, dolphins, small sharks—and the coral give away their real identity as island passages. The longest is on the north-western end of Boghotu, or Santa Isabel Island, to the north of Nggela. The Kia Passage winds through mangroves and jungle for about 50 kilometres, connecting the Pacific on the northern coast with New Georgia Sound to the south. It opens wide midway and becomes a great inland lake, but in other places it contracts to a mere 50 metres between banks, with a tide rush through the thin gap that reaches 12 knots.

I dived in one of these passages about 20 kilometres west of the Kia Passage. I paddled from our camp on the coast well inland up the passage while the tide was slack. Once the tide changed, the water quickly gained speed and reached about six knots. With my kayak on a length of rope, I had an exhilarating swim back towards the sea, bobbing effortlessly on the current. The water was very clear, and the shore plummeted away in a vertical drop. Huge fan corals hung out barely above the water, busy with noisy, colourful parrots. In the inky blue depths was a chaotic jungle of coral which crackled audibly and was full of Technicolor fish.

The biggest stretch of open water we crossed was the 45 kilometre strait which separates Nggela and Santa Isabel. Eight hours passed before we slid on to sand on Santa Isabel.

The island was named by Spanish explorer and profiteer Don Alvaro de Mendana. He left Peru in the 1560s after hearing an Inca legend of an island nation in the Pacific, rich in gold. At the end of an epic voyage he stumbled upon a large land mass and named it after the expedition's patron saint. Mendana's expedition remained in the Solomons for about six months, at odds with the native



Crystal-clear water, narrow passages and coral in Marovo Lagoon, near the end of the trip. **Right,** school children on Rendova Island lend a hand.

population and looking for gold. Although he returned to Peru empty-handed, he presented a glowing report of the enigmatic islands he had visited, calling them the Islands of Solomon in the belief that they contained wealth comparable with that of King Solomon's legendary mines.

Before Mendana, Santa Isabel was known as Boghotu, a name still widely used. Our arrival was greeted more casually than Mendana's. He had faced skirmishes almost immediately upon contact, after showing disgust when offered the roasted arm of a young male. Boghotu people are now known for their calmness and good looks. We spent the

next two months cruising the 250 kilometre length of the thinly populated north coast and the labyrinth of islands and passages on the west end, where the island disappears into Manning Strait.

The marine life around this strait is astounding. Although this was the remotest place on the voyage, we ate better here than anywhere. Fish were simple to catch and the diving was superb. Our boats were stable enough to climb into and out of in open water, and were easy to take in tow on a length of rope when swimming. They gave us access to offshore reefs for snorkelling, and a comforting back-up when there were sharks about. Neither of us is very interested in hunting, but spear-fishing provided our most reliable source of food.



Across the Manning Strait from Santa Isabel is Larau, or Choiseul Island. We chose to cruise the island's south coast. Larau is a steep island and, like most of the other Solomon Islands, clad in a tangled shock of glistening green jungle. It has some of the largest rivers in the country. It is possible to paddle up some of them deep into the island's mysterious interior.

We had hoped to continue westwards from Larau to Bougainville, but turmoil continued to prevail and the Solomon Islands Government had recently closed its border with the separatist island. We paddled 40 kilometres across Bougainville Strait to a small, uninhabited island group only a few kilometres from Bougainville. Here we spent a couple of days diving and exploring, then turned about and returned to Larau in time to catch a small trading ship for a ride south to the New Georgia Group.

The well-equipped small town of Ghizo is the capital of the prosperous Western Province of the Solomons. After a brief break there, we paddled east into the huge lagoon systems of this area—which include Marovo Lagoon, the world's largest.

By now, it was August, and here, further to the south, the south-east trade winds were in steady swing. We had planned to favour a nor'westerly course, but because of the dead end at Bougainville we were now heading in the opposite direction. For days we fought stout head winds and miserable, short, steep seas. Down the east coast of Rendova Island we took a long break, from the winds and stopped in a pleasant village where we had called in to seek the permission of the customary landowners

to visit an island named Tetepare, a little further to the south-east.

Tetepare is an enigma. According to an American archaeologist who visited it a little over a year before us, the island's human inhabitants vanished about a century ago—but the cause of their disappearance is a mystery. Now Tetepare Island remains an immaculate wilderness. A small coconut plantation has

from the construction of an international casino to its proclamation as a National Park. We spied quite a few crocodiles around the island. One popped up out of lovely clear water just off the bows of our kayaks while we were inspecting a coral reef where we planned to dive—about 500 metres off shore! We took particular care around the base camp we established at the mouth of the largest river on



occupied the island's western tip for 20 years and a couple of small settlements have been established on nearby Rendova, but a good 90 per cent of the island is an exhilarating maze of jungle, bird life and rivers. With the disappearance of the previous inhabitants, land ownership claims are many, and future proposals for the island range

the island in a sheltered bay on the north coast.

From Tetepare we moved north into Marovo Lagoon. It's a lovely, gentle place to travel by kayak. After battling head winds for two months, the big lagoon's sheltered waters made a welcome break—and gave us the opportunity to wind down. Our visitors' permits would soon run out and our trip was drawing to a close.

Mixed feelings characterized our last night out. We spent it on a tiny, uninhabited, thickly wooded islet. Not a breath of air disturbed the lagoon's mirror surface. The night sky glowed without cloud and soon became the stage for a bright moon. Collecting a great pile of driftwood, we set ablaze a bonfire and ceremoniously burnt various bits and pieces which, now that the paddling was over, were junk, but were far too precious to throw away. The crackling flames bobbed brightly off the white sand and were unbearably hot in the warm, sticky, still night. The rising heat ruffled the limbs and long leaves of the coconut palms overhead.

Morning came and we kicked the few pieces of ash that remained into the sand and the hot sea and began the short paddle to a village on the mainland, where we caught a ship back to Honiara in the afternoon. ■

*Wade Fairley took up sea kayaking out of frustration with dry rivers and as a cheaper alternative to owning a seagoing yacht. At the time of publication, he was a long way from the equator, paddling in Chilean Patagonia. Between trips, he works as a freelance cameraman and river guide.*

## Solomon Islands







# *THE RED CENTRE*

Life amid the sand, by *Geoff Spanner*







**Left**, flowers and sand dune, Sturt National Park.

**Below**, pink cockatoos at their nest, Mootwingee National Park. Both photos were taken in far north-western New South Wales.





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# THE PASSES OF NARROW NECK

Popular Blue Mountains bushwalking,  
by David and Roger Collison

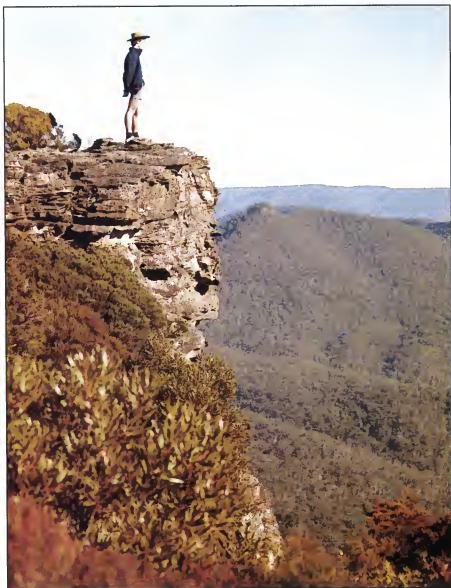
The Blue Mountains plateau is a remarkable geological feature. It was formed from the erosion of the Miocene plain after the Kosciusko uplift. Narrow Neck is a 15 kilometre extension to the plateau, which lies to the south of Katoomba in the western Blue Mountains of New South Wales, between the Jamison Valley to the east and the Megalong Valley to the west. It is, in fact, two narrow necks, neither of which is more than 100 metres wide, the first at the start of the plateau, the second about a third of the way along it.

At its widest point, the plateau has a width of two-and-a-half kilometres. It is ringed by precipitous bluffs, some as high as 300 metres. At first glance, it looks almost impossible to descend from the plateau at any point, but it's deceptive. There are, in fact, a number of possible descent routes. Some of these, such as the Golden Staircase and Taros Ladder, are familiar to local bushwalkers; others are scarcely known. The purpose of this article is to describe all the recorded descents.

A party led by Tom Mutch made one of the first recorded journeys to the southern end of Narrow Neck in 1913. Members of the party left a bottle on what is known as Clear Hill; a year later, Myles Dunphy and his friend Raphael (Ray) Doyle made the same journey and discovered the cairn and the message in the bottle. Dunphy's party camped at what became known as Glenraphael and explored the bluffs in the area.

Even before this, Narrow Neck had been partially explored by miners from the Jamison Valley, who used an access route from Castle Head which led down to the mines on and behind the Ruined Castle. Others used Red Ledge Pass, which gave access to the Glen shale mine in the Megalong Valley. A tunnel, which still exists, linked two mining areas and passed under Narrow Neck just to the north of the point where the Golden Staircase descends today.

Bushwalkers started taking a serious interest in this area in the late 1920s and Carlon Head was first ascended by members of the Sydney Bush Walkers (known as the 'tigers') in April 1937. A number of other passes have been found over the years, including one near Glenraphael (by Dunphy), which is still known as Dunphys Pass. Walls Pass was placed by Wilf Hilder, and Duncans Pass (named after the Duncan family from Euroka in the Megalong Valley) provided another access route to the Wild Dog Mountains. In about 1929, Walter Tarr (Taro), an active member of the Sydney Bush Walkers, placed ladders at the southern end of Narrow Neck, which lessened the popularity of Duncans Pass.



Above Taros Ladder at the southern end of the Narrow Neck plateau, looking out over the Wild Dog Mountains. Roger Collison

In the 1960s, the Water Board installed a major water link between Oberon and Katoomba. This provided yet another pass, known as the Water Board or Dixons Ladders—or sometimes as O'Sullivan's Ladders after the engineer who constructed a road in 1892, using relief labour during a depression. The idea of O'Sullivan's road was

to provide access to Megalong Valley, which it failed to do; but today it is used as an access road to the water-pumping station at the top of the ladders. Part of the way down this road, incidentally, is a large overhanging rock with a number of climbs on it. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the rock was known as Dingbats Hangover, a delightful name that seems to be forgotten today.

Several other passes require some effort to get down. Herbaceous Gully is essentially an abseil route down to the rockclimbing cliffs of





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Narrow Neck; Black Billy Head again requires a rope; and the most difficult pass described is Mitchell's Creek.

There have been a number of changes since the early 1900s when the first recorded explorations along Narrow Neck took place. There were no formal tracks then, except at the very beginning of the Neck, but gradually the bushwalking clubs created tracks, first down Dunphys Pass and Duncans Pass, then down what became Taros, which opened the way to the naturally clear Medlow Gap and the Wild Dog Mountains. Later, an access route was placed on Carlon Head and, shortly afterwards, in the 1930s, a fire track was made which has provided access to the fire tower on Bushwalkers Hill.

In the last few years there has been mounting pressure for this road to be closed south of the Golden Stairs. The fire tower, it is claimed, is no longer needed; it could be replaced by one on Kings Tableland, used in conjunction with that on Mt Bindo (which has views over the Megalong Valley that are not visible from Kings Tableland). In addition, fire towers have a limited role today with the extensive use of helicopters and other aircraft.

There has been voluminous correspondence on the matter, but the road is still open—and, indeed, was recently 'improved'. If it were closed, Narrow Neck would become once again the unspoiled area it used to be; and if the Blue Mountains National Park were given World Heritage listing (a submission to this end by the Colong Foundation is under way), the area would again be protected from wanton degradation.

## Maps

The most useful maps for the area are the Land Information Centre (formerly CMA) 1:25 000 topographic maps *Hampton, Katoomba, Jamison and Jenolan*. Myles Dunphy's *Gangeral* sketch map is also helpful. For the historian, a series of maps made by Dunphy during the 1920s, but never published, is held in the Mitchell Library (State Library of New South Wales) and can be seen only by arrangement.

## Access

Katoomba is about two hours' drive west of Sydney on the Great Western Highway, and can also be reached by train. The railway station is at the top of Katoomba Street, the town's main commercial thoroughfare. A taxi from the rank outside the station will take you to Narrow Neck for between six and ten dollars. Otherwise, follow Katoomba Street downhill until a sign on the right points to the Scenic Railway, today a tourist attraction but once the main means of hauling coal and oil shale out of the Jamison Valley. Continue past the railway for 1.1 kilometres to an unmarked turn-off on the left on to the unsealed Narrow Neck Road (formerly Glenraphael Drive). The parking area for the Golden Staircase walk is 1.9 kilometres down this road.

The following walk descriptions proceed clockwise from the Jamison Valley, round to the southern tip of Narrow Neck and then up the Megalong Valley side to Dixons Ladders.

## The Golden Staircase

The Golden Staircase was originally used by miners for access to the coal and shale mines in the Jamison Valley. There is a parking area at the beginning near an information board provided by the National Parks & Wildlife

Service. The way down is clear, and there are many stairs and handrails. The descent is almost vertical to the main valley track, which comes round from the Scenic Railway past the awesome Landslide, then continues round to the Ruined Castle and Mt Solitary. Originally there were no stairs; the steel spikes used by the miners can still be seen just before the first of the stairs. On the way down, in a gully on the left side of the track, is the original signpost, a large wooden sign proclaiming 'The Golden Staircase'. The name was taken

## Walls Pass

Proceed along the dirt road to the fire tower on the top of Bushwalkers Hill, approximately two-thirds of the way along the plateau. Follow a route eastwards along the ridge to the cliff edge. This point is known as CMW Head after the Coast and Mountain Walkers club of Sydney. There is little scrub. It is possible to abseil down from this point.

From here, follow the cliffline north to Walls Head. The descent is marked by a stone cairn and a large pointer stick. The iron spikes and



Walls Pass is one of several on Narrow Neck to warrant chains and spikes for safety (and rock-climbers argue about the odd bolt!). David Noble

from a Salvation Army hymn, now long forgotten, which contained the quaint line 'Walking up the Golden Stairs'.

## Castle Head

To reach this 'pass', go through the gate on Narrow Neck, then on for about half a kilometre to the first track on the left—a poorly formed fire road. Follow this until it divides, and take the first left-hand branch. From here, a track (the road has now deteriorated) appears from the northern end. Follow this track out along the clifftops to the look-out and a trig point.

Traces of the original track still go out to the bluffs. It descended by way of a wooden ladder to the ridge which becomes the Ruined Castle. It gave ideal access to the shale mines of the Ruined Castle and Mt Solitary. Present access is limited because of poor abseil anchors, but descent is possible off rock bolards by joining two 50 metre ropes. It may be rather less than the ideal descent route, but the views from the bluff are well worth seeing.

chains which lead down a precipitous cliff and into Cedar Creek are difficult to find, and time should be allowed to locate them. Some walkers need a rope to go down the spikes and chains, which cover a considerable cliff height. The going is difficult immediately below the cliff but relatively easy after this to Cedar Creek. Either follow the creek up to the Ruined Castle, or go downstream to the road within the Water Board prohibited area, then out by Kedumba Creek or Medlow Gap.

## Duncans Pass

This pass was first discovered by Jack Debert and Frank Duncan in June 1928. Follow the gravel road out past Clear Hill. Just before the end of the road, a track extends out to the right and drops through a cleft in the rock. Special care must be taken at night not to descend all the way because the track branches off to the left about three-quarters of the way down (35 metres). From here it is signposted with white arrows and passes a cave ('the cave at the end of Narrow Neck') in which up to four people can sleep. There is no water. Immediately after this cave, the track passes a rockclimb which goes up a corner. The track then improves as it continues up toward the southern ridge of



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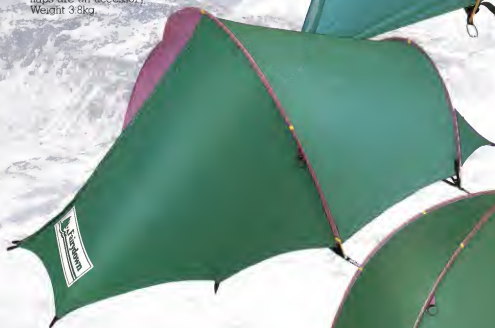
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Narrow Neck. From here, easy scrambling leads past the memorial sign to Walter Tarr.

This section of track is awkward if you have a large pack because it proceeds past a narrow bluff. An easy descent from here leads to a large, flat rock from which the routes down Duncans Pass and Taros Ladder branch off. Looking up Cedar Creek, Duncans Pass leads round to the right. Stay close to the cliffline for about 200 metres until easy, loose shale leads to a route below the major cliffs. Follow this back to the right (looking out to the valley), round to the base of the cliffs, then easily rejoin the Taros Ladder track. This leads to Mt Debert and Medlow Gap.

## Taros Ladder

Follow the Duncans Pass route until the large, flat rock where it branches off to the right (looking up Cedar Creek), then go down the cliff on iron spikes. Some parties find this difficult and require a rope. From the base of this cliff an easy track leads to Mt Debert (under the power stanchion) and eventually to Medlow Gap. This is the most popular descent route off the end of Narrow Neck and is really only difficult at night. From the top of Taros Ladder, there are superb views out to Mt Merrimigal, Mt Warrigal, Mt Dingo, Mt Mouin, the High Gangerang, Mt Jenolan and Mt Guougang, and over the valleys of the Cox River and Breakfast Creek.

## Dunphy's Pass

About three kilometres back towards Katoomba, just before heading up to the end of Bushwalkers Hill, there is a water pipe on the east side of the road. This provides good drinking water and is a useful indicator to the turn-off to Dunphy's Pass. It is easily visible only when travelling north.

The route out is essentially a bush bash through thick scrub (long trousers are essential). From the water pipe, descend to the lower reaches of Glenraphael Swamp and make the awkward climb up the other side of the cliff head; then proceed west along the cliff-top past two major gullies. The gully after this is the descent route. It can be quite difficult to locate the first time. It is only a short distance to this point (about one kilometre), but the scrub is so dense that it is wise to allow at least an hour.

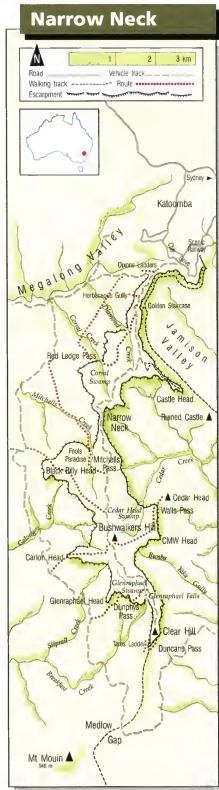
The correct route down is not obvious from the top and is only distinguishable from the other gullies in the area by its prominent width at the half-way ledge. Once the correct gully has been found, go down this (steeply) to the half-way ledge, which, in typical Blue Mountains fashion, is red shale.

When Dunphy and Raphael discovered the pass in the new year of 1914, they called this area the Wallaby Parade because there were so many wallaby droppings and they were fearful of being knocked over the edge! On their first visit, they had inspected the section to the right (looking up at the cliff) and found no descent route; only on a later trip, in 1926, when they explored the Wallaby Parade to the left (again looking toward the cliff), did they find the pass.

The route proceeds past three waterfalls (depending on weather conditions), eventually leading into a major gully. Going down this gully is not easy because of a two metre cliff which has to be negotiated (it is possible without ropes). In the 1920s there were plans

to put spikes down the cliff, but this was never done because of the discovery of Duncans Pass soon afterwards. The gully below the cliff is very scrubby and it takes a considerable time to reach the fire road on the western side of Narrow Neck.

Although it is rather difficult and involves quite a deal of scrub bashing, this is a very satisfying way to descend from Narrow Neck.



It gives a most powerful understanding of what the early explorers accomplished when there were no roads or spikes.

## Carlton Head

This is one of the better-known tracks down off Narrow Neck. Just after the fire tower (when heading north) is a track which can be followed out to Carlton Head. The start is difficult to find and it may be easier to reach it by walking westwards from the tower through the low grass. The track goes in a southerly direction for quite a way, then turns to the west, where there are outstanding views. The descent, using chains and iron spikes in the cliff, is a serious undertaking. From the base of the chains, the track proceeds down to the fire track below Narrow Neck on the western side, which it reaches just opposite the track to Carlton's farm.

## Black Billy Head

A short distance on the Katoomba side of the fire tower is a ridge which leads out to Black Billy Head. Fools Paradise is to the right. This is a less used pass and a bush bash (again, long trousers are recommended). Once at the head, there is a creek in a major marsh to the right. Don't go down here! Instead, stay on the true left side, up high, until the cliff edge. Along the cliff to the left is a smaller gully, and from here it is possible to proceed with a 15 metre abseil to the base of the cliffs. Difficult scrambling leads to the valley.

## Mitchells Creek

This is the most difficult of the descents and should only be attempted by very experienced walkers.

Just south of the second narrow neck (the first if heading back to Katoomba), there are two small side streams, marked on the CMA topographic map, which flow east to west into Mitchells Creek. Take the more southerly of these and follow it down into Mitchells Creek through fairly thick, moist, scrubby bushland. Soon after reaching the creek proper comes the first major obstacle—an 80 metre waterfall. It looks as though there may be an exciting abseil through a keyhole, but the descent described here is by the true left bank, without abseils.

Follow this out, well above the main creek, for about 200 metres until it is possible to zigzag back, eventually reaching the base of the waterfall at a large pool. This leads to a second waterfall, which, though smaller, is harder to negotiate. It is again necessary to keep to the true left bank—and to jump about three metres down (a rope may be better). It is a committing move because from here it would be difficult to ascend again.

Follow the creek downstream for another 500 metres to the cliff edge of Narrow Neck and a third waterfall. To avoid this, move again to the true left bank and follow the main cliffline round for about 150–200 metres. Just before another gully, a tree grows horizontally out from the cliff: climb out on this for about three metres, then change trees and climb down for about five metres to the base of the cliff.

Relatively easy scrambling leads to another, smaller waterfall, which can be negotiated easily on the true right bank. From here, the route moves to a ridge to the right and passes yet another waterfall. After this, the ground becomes sufficiently flat to traverse to the right and out to farm land and roads.



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Terry Tremble on Mt McKinley, Alaska

## TRACK NOTES

### Red Ledge Pass

This classic walk takes a track which leads off from just above the initial steep climb on the Narrow Neck fire road, after the parking area at the top of the Golden Staircase (an area known as Stony Top). Just behind the guard-rail at the top of this hill is a portion of the original bushwalkers' track out along Narrow Neck. It is very scrubby, but still relatively easy to follow. After about 300 metres, a negotiable route to a look-out known as Malcoms Chair branches off this track.

The main track goes down to Diamond Creek and Diamond Spray Falls: the reason for these names will be apparent on a windy day. Cross the creek and continue up the other side to the top of the ridge. This eventually comes out to the Narrow Neck fire road. Do not follow the ridge, but instead descend the ridge to the right (looking south) to Corral Creek, and follow the creek down to the cliff edge.

To the right is Yellow Ledge, which provides good views over Megalong Valley, but the pass is to the left, looking out. Follow the red ledge about 200 metres to a large hole in the cliff. Cairns mark the track down through a cleft. About 150 metres to the left (looking out) is the descent to an old shale mine rail track and a major incline. Descend this and follow the main rail access to the Jamison Valley back to the Water Board access road. This railway went through a tunnel under Narrow Neck, called the Daylight Tunnel. (Another tunnel, the Mt Rennie Tunnel, went under Dogface and Malaita Point.) Finding Red Ledge Pass from below is difficult, and familiarity with the area is essential before attempting this walk in reverse.

### Herbaceous Gully

Except for experienced rockclimbers, this is strictly a descent route: it is a grade-10 rock-climb out. Just north of the car-park at the top of the Golden Staircase is a smaller car-park on the right side of the road. There is no track here, but head due west to the cliffs. A small cliff (about three metres high) must be descended. Once at the main cliff, follow it to the left (looking out) for about 30 or 40 metres to a major gully, known as Herbaceous Gully. On the northern side is a large abseil ring. A single-rope abseil leads down to the base of the gully. From here, first walk, then go down chains, to another abseil. This leads to the base of the cliff through a small tunnel. At the bottom is a rockclimbers' track, which leads back to Dixons Ladders.

### Dixons (Water Board) Ladders

Just before Cliff Drive on the return journey north is a turn-off known as O'Sullivan's Folly, which leads down to the Water Board pumping station. Follow this road (ignoring the old 'Do Not Enter' sign) to the pumping station house. From here, a track descends a steel ladder, then follows a water pipe to the cliff edge. Descend the cliff by means of three long steel ladders, then by another two ladders to get to the Water Board access road. The track continues straight down the hill. ■

David Collison is a consultant physician and counsellor from Sydney who for many years has been an active bushwalker and has walked in New Zealand, Nepal and Kashmir as well as in Australia. Roger Collison was introduced to bushwalking by David, his father, and has walked extensively in the Blue Mountains and elsewhere in Australia, and abroad. He is also a climber and cross-country skier, and works in a senior position with a consulting firm in Sydney.



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# WARM TOPS

In search of the golden fleece, with *Glenn Tempest*

In a little over three years since *Wild* last published a warm-wear survey, there has been nothing short of a 'fleece explosion' on the Australian clothing market. Unaware of its extent, and safely armed with a media entry pass, I visited two ski and outdoor industry shows in Canberra late last year in the hope of uncovering new warm garments of interest to *Wild* readers. It didn't take long to realize that I had grossly underestimated the range and quantity I would find. A walk through a couple of Melbourne's big department stores further confirmed my worst fears. Fleece tops had indeed become both popular and fashionable amongst the general public.

After a plea to the Editor for a sanity-saving solution, it was decided to risk a few complaints by concentrating solely on garments designed for outdoors use and, more specifically, for the rucksack sports market. Of these, only the major garments of any particular brand have been described in full. Garments under the same label that are substantially the same or have only minor differences have been gathered together in the other garments column in the table. For example, two tops may share the same basic features but have a different closure at the neck. Garments at the fashion end of the outdoors market which retain few, if any, valuable practical features other than the fabric used have been omitted.

The table is divided into four parts according to garment style. Along with pullovers, jackets and vests, there is a section devoted to extreme jackets. These last are distinguished by their suitability for extreme applications—especially in very cold weather, and often outside Australia; all feature an insulated hood, adjustable cuffs and a full zip closure with draught-tube.

**Insulating materials.** Malden Mills, possibly the world's largest manufacturer of polyester fleece, has now simplified the naming of its range of fabrics. Entitled Polartec 100, 200 and 300, these comprise the largest range by far of insulation products available. Malden describes Polartec 100 as 'generally lightweight, next-to-skin layer fabrics...for use as underwear, shirting or lining'. After much consultation, I decided to include in the survey any garment made of Polartec 100, provided it also incorporated an outer shell fabric; this combination is particularly suitable for active use. Polartec 200 is a mid-weight fleece for use in mild climates. It is ideal for Australian conditions and is now the most popular fleece on our market. Polartec 300 is a heavyweight fleece for use in very cold conditions and is a perfect choice for those wanting the warmest fleece available. Snow campers, in particular, will benefit from the warmth that Polartec 300 provides. Of interest, too, is the growing number of other versions of fleece fabrics. Paddy Pallin, Peter



Some days you just wouldn't be without one! Heading home from the Walls of Jerusalem, Tasmania. *Ward Totham*

Storm and Wilderness by Macpac, for example, use fleeces of similar weight under different names. The properties of all these polyester fleece fabrics are still very similar. A

garment made from fleece is easy to care for, dries rapidly and is very warm for its small bulk. Worth investigating, but not shown in the table, is whether cuffs and waistband are made of the same material as the rest of the garment or of some other material—which may not have the same thermal properties as the main fabric.



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Other synthetic insulation products, such as Thinsulate and Intercept, are also designed with ease of care, high warmth and low bulk in mind. As well, they are invariably covered with inner and outer shell fabrics, which further increase the thermal efficiency of the garment. Down is the only natural insulator considered in this survey and, warmth for weight, is still the best of all. Down's biggest drawbacks are that it is difficult to care for and very slow to dry. For these reasons many down-filled garments have a waterproof outer shell—of Gore-Tex or Entrant, for example.

Lining materials such as Gore XCR and Pertex are used to provide a higher degree of protection from the wind—and they make pullovers easier to pull on and off. In a number of cases, an outer material gives full or partial wind protection and improves durability to some degree, especially on the shoulders and arms. Outer fabrics used mainly for looks are not listed.

Other columns indicate the main closure used—how the garment 'does up'—and whether or not the garment has hand-warmer pockets. Any other pockets are detailed with

reference to their location and nature. The manufacturer's claimed weight refers to a medium-sized garment. The approximate price is to the nearest dollar and, in most cases, is that quoted by the supplier.

Because of fluctuations in the supply of fabric and materials, there may be variations in the models listed from time to time. ■

Glenn Tempest (see Contributors in *Wild* no 4) has been a Special Adviser to *Wild* since our second issue. Glenn is a renowned raconteur, climber, cross-country skier and mountain photographer.

## What's it made of?

### A quick reference guide to fabrics—what they're called and what they are

Down	Natural insulator plucked from ducks and geese
Entrant	Honeycombed microporous fabric coating
Exodus	Polyester microfibre (72%) and cotton (28%)
Gore-Tex	Very thin PTFE (Teflon) microporous membrane
Gore XCR	New version Gore-Tex membrane laminate
Intercept	Crimped and curled polyester microfibre
Isotherm	Mid-weight polyester fleece
Microfit	Superfine 100% polyester microfibre
Pertex	Tightly woven 100% nylon microfibre
Pluslite	Mid-weight polyester fleece
Polartec 100	Lightweight polyester fleece
Polartec 200	Mid-weight polyester fleece
Polartec 200S	Mid-weight polyester fleece with Lycra for stretch
Polartec 300	Heavyweight polyester fleece
Reflex	Hydrophilic impregnated fabric coating
Solarplus	Heavyweight polyester fleece
Solartek	Lightweight polyester fleece
Supplex	Extremely thin 100% nylon, warm to touch
Taffeta	Closely woven nylon or viscose fabric
Taslan	100% nylon textured yarn
Thinsulate	Polypropylene (65%) and polyester (35%) microfibre
Whisper Fleece	Mid-weight polyester fleece

## Wild Gear Survey Warm tops

	Insulating material(s)	Lining material	Outer material	Main closure	Hand-warmer pockets	Other pockets	Claimed weight, grams	Other garments	Approx. price, \$
<b>Jackets</b>									
Bergshuk UK Rock Hopper IA	Polartec 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	560	1	219
Chirook	Polartec 200	Gore XCR	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	650	—	369
Caribee Australia Jacket	Whisper Fleece	Taffeta sleeves	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	700	—	89
DB Stuff Australia Jacket	Polarplus 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes	—	500	3	110
Earth See Sky New Zealand Rif Rif Jacket	Polartec 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	630	2	148
Fairydorn New Zealand Killington	Polartec 200	—	Microfit shoulders	Long zip	Yes	—	400	—	120
F16 Jacket	Polartec 300	—	Microfit neck	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	800	—	132
Vali	Polartec 100	—	Microfit	Long zip	Yes	1 chest	500	—	200
Helmark New Zealand Jacket	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes	—	715	1	125
Interlink Australia Men Range	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes	—	700	—	140
J&H Australia Dunper	Down	Pertex	Pertex	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	340	—	179
Kathmandu New Zealand Reversible Jacket	Polartec 100	—	Taffeta	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	—	615	—	135
Standard Jacket	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	—	700	1	140
Combo Jacket	Polartec 300 Polartec 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes	—	740	1	150
Balke Island Jacket	Polartec 300	Taffeta	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	650	—	169
Monti Australia Oxorio	Polartec 100	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	415	—	81
Oson	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	665	—	135
Mountain Designs Australia Torn & Country	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	800	1	149
Tundra Full Zip	Polartec 300	Nylon front	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	630	2	179
Alpine	Polartec 200S	—	Lycra weaver patches	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	800	—	199
Magic Jacket	Polartec 200	—	Gore XCR	Long zip	Yes	2 internal	1000	—	269
Mountain High Australia Polar Ice	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	738	1	159
Celestial	Polartec 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	750	2	200
Tundra	Polartec 200	Supplex	—	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	2 chest	622	1	200
Warm Ride	Polartec 300	Supplex	—	Long zip	Yes	1 chest	637	—	210
Paddy Pallen Australia Fire	Pluslite	—	—	Long zip	Yes	1 chest, zip	550	—	139
Furnace	Intercept 150	Pertex	Exodus	Long zip, studs	Yes	2 chest, zips	696	—	269



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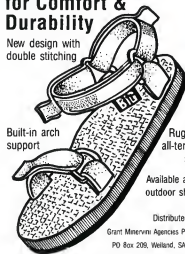


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## WILD GEAR SURVEY

### Wild Gear Survey Warm tops continued

	Insulating material(s)	Lining material	Outer material	Men's closure	Hand-warmer pockets	Other pockets	Clarmed weight, grams	Other garments	Approx price, \$
<b>Jackets continued</b>									
<b>Peter Storm UK</b> Jacket 560	Isoterm	-	-	Long zip	Yes	-	550	-	233
<b>Shogun Australia</b> Standard Jacket	Polartec 300	-	-	Long zip, studs	Yes	-	na	1	175
<b>Tenaxi Australia</b> Bachle	Polartec 200	-	-	Long zip	Yes	-	510	-	149
<b>Torpako Australia</b> Jacket	Polartec 300	-	-	Long zip	Yes	-	na	-	190
<b>Vango UK</b> Challenge	Polartec 200	-	-	Long zip	Yes, zps	1 rear	na	1	154
<b>Apollu</b>	Polartec 200	Patex	-	Long zip	Yes, zps	1 rear	na	-	192
<b>Wilderness by Macpac</b> New Zealand Solartek Jacket	Solartek	Taffeta	-	Long zip	Yes	1 chest, z.p. 1 internal	400	-	98
<b>Solarplus Jacket</b>	Solarplus	-	-	Long zip	Yes	-	575	2	135
<b>Chinook</b>	Solartek	-	Reflux	Long zip	Yes, zps	1 internal	600	-	245
<b>Wilderness Equipment Australia</b> Lewwin	Polartec 300	-	-	Long zip	Yes	2 cargo, zps	720	1	155
<b>Pullovers</b>									
<b>Bergheim UK</b> Zip Sweater	Polartec 200	-	-	Short zip	No	1 chest, z.p.	405	-	189
<b>Cascade Sweater</b>	Polartec 200	-	-	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	580	-	269
<b>Tramontana</b>	Polartec 200	Gore XCR	-	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	635	-	349
<b>Caribee Australia</b> Pullover	Whisper Fleece	Taffeta sleeves	-	Short np	Yes, zps	-	700	-	72
<b>Clyde Australia</b> Polar F	Polartec 300	-	-	Short zip, studs	Yes	-	650	-	100
<b>DB Stuff Australia</b> Hd Shirt	Polartec 200S	-	-	-	No	-	290	1	68
<b>Juniper</b>	Polartec 200	-	-	Short zip	Yes	-	480	3	105
<b>Earth See Sky New Zealand</b> Polarite 1 Jumper	Polarite 200	-	-	Short zip	Yes	1 chest, z.p.	560	2	119
<b>Poleplus Jumper</b>	Polarite 300	-	-	Short zip	Yes	-	739	-	125
<b>Fairydun New Zealand</b> Gulotte	Polarite 200	-	-	Short zip	No	1 chest	400	3	120
<b>F18 Jumper</b>	Polarite 300	-	Microf neck	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	520	-	129
<b>Aspen</b>	Polarite 100	-	Microf	Short zip	Yes	1 chest	443	1	190
<b>Helmek New Zealand</b> Jumper	Polarite 200	-	-	Short zip	Yes	-	600	-	99
<b>J&amp;H Australia</b> Dumper Jumper	Down	Patex	Patex	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	290	-	159
<b>Kathmandu New Zealand</b> Reversible Jumper	Polarite 100	-	Taffeta	Short zip	Yes	-	740	-	126
<b>Standard Jumper</b>	Polarite 300	-	-	Short zip	Yes, zps	1 chest, z.p.	700	1	130
<b>Sincoo Jumper</b>	Polarite 200	-	Taffeta	Studs	Yes	-	600	-	180
<b>Mort Australia</b> Olton	Polarite 300	-	-	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	670	1	130
<b>Mountain Designs Australia</b> Town & Country	Polarite 300	-	-	Short zip	No	1 chest	700	1	129
<b>Alpine</b>	Polarite 200S	-	Gore XCR	Short zip	Yes, zps	-	700	-	179





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Colour	Fly: olive; inner tent: gold
Fly fabric	Coated rip-stop nylon UV stabilised 1500 mm water column pressure rated
Inner fabrics	Breathable nylon Waterproof floor
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## WILD GEAR SURVEY

### Wild Gear Survey Warm tops *continued*

	Insulating material(s)	Lining material	Outer material	Main closure	Hand-warmer pockets	Other pockets	Clamped weight, grams	Other garments	Approx. price, \$
<b>Pullovers</b> <i>continued</i>									
<b>Mountain High Australia</b> Double Gator	Polartec 300	—	—	Studs	Yes, zips	—	670	1	135
Original	Polartec 200	—	—	Short zip	Yes, zips	—	634	2	150
<b>Paddy Pallo Australia</b> Flash	Pluslite	—	—	—	No	1 chest, zip	475	—	99
Flame	Pluslite	—	—	Studs	Yes	1 chest, zip	523	—	139
Inferno	Intercept 80	Pertex	Exodus	Short zip	Yes	1 chest, zip	490	—	179
<b>Peter Storm UK</b> Pullover 561	Isoterm	—	—	Short zip	Yes	—	540	—	220
<b>Snowgum Australia</b> Three Moons	Polartec 200	—	—	Draw cord	No	—	na	—	135
Standard Pullover	Polartec 300	—	—	Short zip	Yes, zips	—	na	2	135
Broken Lance	Polartec 300	—	Leather foamers	Short zip	Yes, zips	—	na	—	175
<b>Tenanti Australia</b> Bertu	Polartec 200	—	—	Short zip	No	—	445	2	129
Bedroom	Polartec 200	—	—	Studs	Yes	—	492	1	139
<b>Torgeskis Australia</b> Popover	Polartec 300	—	—	Short zip	Yes	—	na	1	100
<b>Vengo UK</b> Zinc	Polartec 200	—	—	—	No	—	na	—	140
Puffin	Polartec 200	—	—	Studs	Yes, zips	—	na	—	164
Nemesis	Polartec 200	Pertex	—	Short zip, studs	Yes, zips	1 rear	na	—	192
<b>Widerness by Macpac</b> New Zealand Scorpius Pullover	Scorpius	—	—	Short zip	Yes	—	578	1	125
Escapee	Scorpius	—	—	Short zip	Yes	1 chest, zip	760	—	165
<b>Widerness Equipment Australia</b> Normalup	Polartec 300	—	—	Side zips	Yes, zips	—	500	—	120
<b>Vests</b>									
<b>DP Stuff Australia</b> Vest	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes	—	350	—	89
<b>J&amp;H Australia</b> Vest	Down	Pertex	Pertex	Long zip	Yes	1 internal	350	1	129
<b>Kellmandu New Zealand</b> Polartec Vest	Polartec 200	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	295	—	100
<b>Mont Australia</b> Igloo Vest	Down	Taffeta	Nylon microfibre	Long zip	Yes	—	330	—	90
<b>Mountain High Australia</b> Vest	Polartec 300	—	—	Long zip	Yes, zips	—	516	—	90
<b>Extreme jackets</b>									
<b>Fairydawn New Zealand</b> Blizzard	Down	Taffeta	Eriant	Long zip	Yes	2 internal	1445	—	450
<b>J&amp;H Australia</b> Bigdon	Down	Pertex	Pertex	Long zip	Yes	1 internal	760	1	312
Envison	Thinsulate	Pertex	Gore-Tex	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	1 internal	1200	—	560
Icebird	Down	Pertex	Gore-Tex	Long zip, Velcro	Yes, zips	2 cargo, 1 internal	950	—	560
<b>Mont Australia</b> Igloo	Down	Taffeta	Nylon microfibre	Long zip, studs	Yes	2 cargo, 1 internal	960	—	320
<b>Mountain Designs Australia</b> Spendthrift	Down	Pertex	Gore-Tex	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	1 chest	1050	—	599
Aurora	Down	Pertex	Gore-Tex	Long zip, studs	Yes, zips	2 chest, 2 internal	1200	—	699



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Photo by Greg Mortimer on recent K2 Expedition



# LIGHTWEIGHT BINOCULARS

Looking further afield—a *Wild* survey

## Choosing and using

On a mountain ridge, in a river valley or a rain forest, many of us have enjoyed a clearer, closer and brighter look at a bird, an animal or a natural feature through binoculars; the rest of us have probably at some time wished we could. Binoculars can enhance the enjoyment to be had from all rucksack activities.

Binoculars are precision instruments. They may contain up to 18 optical components and 200 mechanical parts, and their construction may involve as many as 1800 exact steps. For most people, the purchase of a pair of binoculars is a once-in-a-lifetime choice. Whilst there are hundreds of models, few shops that sell binoculars specialize in optical equipment. Any one outlet will have only a small fraction of the total range available in Australia. Technical knowledge among salespeople is rare. Faced with all this, what do you look for and where do you begin?

Many technical specifications describe the functioning of binoculars, but most users will find the categories here sufficient basis for an informed choice.

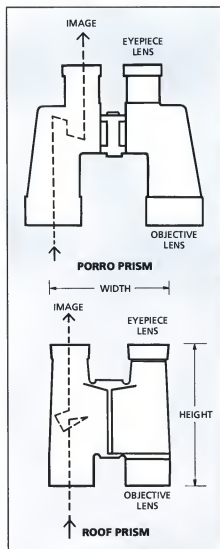
All binoculars carry two numbers expressed as a product: 8 x 30, for example. The first number is the magnification (often designated M), the second the diameter, in millimetres (D), of the objective lens—the lens furthest from the eye. These numbers and the balance between them determine the most important characteristics of a pair of binoculars. This survey is restricted to models which magnify between seven and eight times and have objective-lens diameters between 30 and 42 millimetres. Those that magnify less than seven times are more suitable as opera glasses: they don't bring objects close enough for most outdoor use. Those with more than '8 x' magnification are difficult to hold still, and usually have a relatively narrow field of view. An objective lens smaller than 30 millimetres in diameter also gives only a narrow field of view, and gathers too little light for dim conditions. Binoculars with an objective-lens diameter of more than 42 millimetres are bulky and heavy.

The balance between these figures can be of critical practical importance. For example, in a moving canoe it is essential to have a model with low magnification and a wide field of view, such as 7 x 40 or even 7 x 50; waterproofing may also be desirable! On the other hand, use in moonlight or at dawn or dusk demands the superior light-gathering capacity provided by both higher magnification and a larger objective lens; a suitable figure might be 8 x 40.

Twilight performance is a measure of the capacity to gather light and thereby to give a bright image under dim conditions. It is

calculated by multiplying the square root of the magnification by the objective-lens diameter ( $\sqrt{M \times D}$ ). The higher the figure, the brighter the image—although better quality binoculars will give brighter, sharper images than cheaper ones with the same specifications.

Weight is crucial, and can be minimized by the use of modern, lightweight materials and optical systems. The familiar stepped barrels indicate conventional porro-prism construction; the more complex optics of the roof-prism system result in barrels that are almost cylindrical. Roof-prism binoculars are more compact and, in many cases, much lighter than porro-prism models. They have more



'Hey, look at that!' Benjy Walters can hardly believe his binoculars. John Walters

optical components, though, and therefore need to be of good quality to warrant consideration.

Height and width (see diagram) are listed. 'Thickness' is a function of objective-lens diameter. Together, these indicate the relative compactness of each model. Some binoculars have soft rubber eye-caps which can be folded back to allow spectacle wearers to obtain a good field of view. All those surveyed are good-purpose models, suited to being carried in the rucksack or around the neck and able to give good results under most conditions.

In general, you get what you pay for. Some of the cheapest models are not worth the trouble to buy and use. European—in particular, German—brands have long been the benchmark of quality, but some Japanese and American brands now approach the same



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standard. Whatever binoculars you decide to buy, compare your choice against a brand of proven quality with similar magnification and power. Ensure that the image is clear from edge to edge, without blurring, coloured lines or distortion. Consider purchasing by mail order, as outlets in Australia for some of the best brands are limited. If you are planning to travel overseas, consider buying duty-free; reputable brands are backed by guarantees and service in Australia. Buy the best you can afford. Provided you do not lose them, binoculars are an investment for a lifetime. And choose carefully: binoculars bought in haste may see only dust.

Most binoculars have a system of central focusing. There are two controls, a central ring that adjusts both barrels and a separate one that adjusts only the right barrel. This right-hand setting is used to compensate for differences between the right and left eyes. (On a few military-style binoculars, the two

eye-piece lenses rotate individually for focusing. Some models are auto-focus.)

When first using any binoculars, select a distant object with a sharp outline and, with the right hand covering the right objective lens, use the central focusing ring to bring the left-side image into sharp focus. Now cover the left objective lens with the left hand and focus the right eye-piece lens equally sharply. The same setting for the right barrel can now be selected every time you use those binoculars, and you will be able to focus with the central ring alone.

Perform all focusing adjustments rapidly so that the eyes have insufficient time to compensate for incorrect focus of the binoculars. This will allow the eyes to relax when the true focus for each eye at every distance is achieved.

Binoculars can be carried comfortably under one arm, resting above the hip with the strap over the opposite shoulder. In this

position they are ready to be brought up for use, and will not swing or bounce around.

John Walters

#### No down under

J&H decided it could make its Bushlite down sleeping bag lighter with no loss of warmth by replacing two-thirds of the down-filled panels underneath the bag with a nylon sleeve sized to accept a three-quarter-length sleeping mat. A full-length mat could be used equally well. The hood and three panels at the foot of the bag are filled with down in the usual way, and narrow panels run the length of the sleeve to prevent loss of heat at the sides. The 'bottomless' Abyss Bushlite weighs 1.17 kilograms in its stuff sack (a regular Bushlite weighs around 1.5 kilograms) and sells for RRP \$350. There's an Abyss Super as well, at RRP \$389.



'We are the hollow men...' Kathmandu Baffin island jacket.

#### Elemental

Brisbane retailer K2 Base Camp is importing from New Zealand a new name in outdoor clothing. The Earth Sea Sky range includes pullovers and jackets in Polartec 200 and 300 polyester pile, and rain jackets and anoraks in a variety of fabrics. We've seen the Polarlite II (Polartec 200) Jumper, which has a high collar with a zip, a zipped storage pocket, and hand-warmer pockets; and the Pursuit, an anorak in waterproof/breathable Entrant Hi-Resist coated nylon. These sell for RRP \$119 and \$269, respectively. There's also a Polarplus hat, the Hot Head, in the currently popular 'aviator' style, with double-thickness ear-flaps. RRP \$19. See the Gear Survey in this issue for more on Earth Sea Sky garments.

Other new garments to appear in the survey of warm tops include the Mountain Designs Tundra jacket in Polartec 300, with a high, zipped collar and an elastic draw-cord at the hem, and lined in front with wind-proof nylon (RRP \$179); the Kathmandu Baffin island jacket, also in Polartec 300, with many of the same features plus a fold-away, lightweight Polartec hood, a draw-cord at the collar, and taffeta-lined chest and sleeves (RRP \$169); and three tops in Polartec 200 which are part of the Tanami range of tops, pants and accessories, new this winter in Paddy Pallin shops.

#### Thick and thin

The sleeves, midriff and detachable hood of the J&H Trackwalker jacket are made of Stealth

### Wild Equipment Survey Lightweight binoculars

	Magnification (M)	Objective lens diameter (D), millimetres	Tenight performance (√ M x D)	Optical prism system	Dimensions, height x maximum width, millimetres	Weight, grams	Related models	Comments	Approx price, \$
Bausch & Lomb 8 x 38 Custom Japan	8	38	17.0	Porro	140 x 170	650	7 x 35 Standard	Endorsed by the National Audubon Society, suitable for spectacle wearers	599
Brunton Korea 8 x 42 Tracker II	7	42	17.1	Roof	185 x 114	670	7 x 42 Eltara	Eltara model suitable for spectacle wearers	395
Bushnell Japan 7 x 35	7	35	15.7	Porro	144 x 180	500	8 x 40 Spectator	Made by Bausch & Lomb	169
Fujinon Japan 8 x 35 MTR-SX	8	35	16.5	Porro	123 x 178	700	8 x 35 MTR-SX	Water-resistant, individual eye-piece focusing. Made by Fuji	850
Gerber Japan 8 x 42 ZCF Deluxe	8	40	17.9	Porro	140 x 165	703			195
Hermes France 8 x 32	8	32	16.0	Porro	127 x 154	370	7 x 35		70
Minolta Japan 8 x 40	8	40	17.9	Porro	138 x 179	880	7 x 35		231
7 x 42 Weathermatic	7	42	17.1	Roof	183 x 110	840		For use in wet conditions	487
Nikon Japan 8 x 35 CF	8	35	16.7	Porro	127 x 184	860			312
8 x 30 E-CF WF	8	30	15.5	Porro	101 x 179	580	7 x 35 E-CF	Modelled on proven and rugged Zeiss porro-prism binoculars	569
Pentax Japan 8 x 40 PCF	8	40	17.9	Porro	140 x 180	780	7 x 35 PCF	Widely available	208
8 x 42 PCF	8	42	18.3	Roof	187 x 130	840			389
Steiner Germany 8 x 30 Senator	8	30	15.5	Porro	110 x 170	580		Some with optional compass and range finder	700
Swarovski Austria 8 x 30	8	30	15.5	Porro	130 x 120	540	7 x 42	Rugged and water-resistant; sleek design	1086
Tasco Vancos 8 x 32	8	32	16.0	Porro	127 x 154	455	8 x 40		90
Zeiss Germany 8 x 30 BT Dyolet	8	30	15.5	Roof	117 x 100	570	8 x 30 BIGAT, olive model has individual eye-piece focusing	Superb quality, 30-year guarantee, G4 models have rubber armouring, B models suitable for spectacle wearers	1599
7 x 42 BIGAT Dyolet	7	42	17.1	Roof	180 x 123	800			1775



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Gore-Tex, a much softer, lighter material than the Taslan Gore-Tex of the shoulders and hips. J&H figures that the latter need to be tough because they cop most of the wear from carrying a pack, while the use of the lighter material elsewhere saves a few grams and makes for a more flexible garment. The Trackwalker is probably best suited to use in open country or on skiing or walking tracks, rather than in dense, abrasive scrub. RRP \$349.

### Valate woollen army pants

*Cigana Sportswear* of Berridale, New South Wales, seems determined to prove that it's possible to look cool, yet be comfortably warm when the temperature drops. *Cigana's skivvy and tights* in a new, stretchy, 'thermal' polyester-and-Lycra fabric—somewhat heavier than regular Lycra and with a brushed inner surface—combine slinky looks with, we are told, good cold-weather comfort. They sell for around \$65 and \$55, respectively.

### Bright and early

*First Light internal-frame packs* are made in New Zealand and are available in Australia from a limited number of outlets. The aluminium frame in a *First Light* pack resembles in shape the outline of a 'witch's hat' tipped on its head so that the cross-bar that forms its 'brim' is at the top of the pack. The pointed crown of the hat sits in a reinforced pocket in the hip-belt right against the wearer's sacrum (the five fused vertebrae at the base of the spine, which connect it to the pelvis). *First Light* believes this is the best place for it to do its job of transferring the load from the pack to the wearer's weight-bearing parts. The *Distance 1* is a pack of moderately large capacity with one main compartment and pockets on the lid and on the back—plus a small, zipped pocket inside the lid recommended as a haven for car keys and other small necessities. The *Distance 1* is made of ten-canvas kilograms reinforced with Cordura, weighs 2.3 kilograms, and sells for RRP \$299. Prices for other models—some in canvas, others in Cordura, larger and smaller, with the same or a greater number of compartments and pockets—range from \$169 to \$349.

### Domestic travel

Many *travel packs* include a day pack: it can be handy for short outings from a base or as hand luggage on planes, trains and buses. In most cases it can be zipped to the main pack when the whole lot has to be carried. The day pack that comes with an *Aiking Equipment Travel Pack* instead fits neatly inside a fixed pocket on the back of the pack. In itself, this arrangement is a pleasing alternative to sometimes unsightly collections of zips and straps. It's also a source of added versatility: the day pack can be used separately or stowed with the pack, in the usual way; or it can be carried as a front pack while the main pack is on the back, with the fixed pocket used for extra capacity. Two flaps guard the big main zip against rain; the robust, well-padded, adjustable harness is a reworking of familiar elements; and all the straps, flaps, buckles and zips one expects from a well-appointed travel pack are present. Made by *Aiking Equipment*, Melbourne, this pack weighs 2.8 kilograms or so and sells for RRP \$360.

### More hard cases

A few observations may help you to distinguish *Underwater Kinetics Uke Lights*, a new line of robust, waterproof, compact torches, from their many competitors. We've seen three models of Uke Lights, which take four C cells, four AA cells and two three-volt lithium batteries, respectively. All three produce a beam with a very bright, localized spot at its centre. With batteries fitted, model 4C weighs a hefty 380 grams. Model 4AA is only a little larger than many torches which take only two AA cells. It weighs 130 grams with batteries; battery life, they say, is four or five hours. Model 2L is very compact, and its lithium batteries have a shelf life of between five and ten years—handy in a first aid kit or a car's glove compartment, for example, where a torch may be used only infrequently. The bodies of all three Uke Lights are made of 'engineering grade' plastic. The three models sell for around \$58 (4C), \$30 (4AA) and \$47 (2L), which includes batteries in each case. Imported from the USA by *Richards McCallum*.

### Twixt pack and lip

*Sigg*, the Swiss maker of aluminium bottles for drinks and fuel, has a few new items to tempt the confirmed outdoor tippler. A durable *beverage flask* of 'flat', elliptical cross-section, reliably sealed with the standard *Sigg* screw-top cap, will hold half a litre of your chosen drop. It is coated inside so as to resist oxidation and preserve flavours intact. So too is a new *insulating flask*, with double walls of aluminium, which is shaped to fit into a bicycle flask holder and has a pull-out nipple set in a screw-top cap. It is less bulky than most conventional insulating flasks, but appears to insulate less effectively than they do and, because of its thick walls, has a capacity of less than half a litre. The *beverage flask* weighs 160 grams and sells for RRP \$53.50, and the *insulating flask* weighs 220 grams and sells for RRP \$63. Imported by *Richards McCallum*.

### Steely pan

*Wild* readers who regularly scan the shelves of outdoor gear shops (come on, we know you do it) will have noticed that for some time now it has been possible to obtain, individually or as a set, a *stainless-steel frying pan and saucers* to replace the aluminium ones supplied with the *Trangia 25-1 methylated spirits stove*. The popular stove can be bought complete with steel accessories as the *Trangia 25-7* for around \$99. The three steel pans combined weigh just 20 grams more than the originals in aluminium; they cost around \$19 apiece. A similar range of accessories for the smaller *Trangia 25-1* will apparently be seen soon. Distributed by *Ruscus Supplies* of South Hurstville, New South Wales.

### South of the border

The continually expanding range of *freeze-dried foods* from *Backpacker's Pantry* available in Australia now includes a couple of dishes with a Mexican influence. *Tamale Black Bean Pie* and *Chili Cheese Nachos* [sic] each consist of a bean-based sauce, which is reconstituted by adding boiling water and leaving it to sit, and is then eaten with corn chips. Simple to prepare in this basic form, both can be made

more appetizing with a few additional ingredients. If you have the facilities (and the willpower!), leave the sauce to rehydrate for considerably longer than the suggested ten minutes (24 hours in the refrigerator does no harm at all). And to feed two hungry bushwalkers, take along more corn chips or other fillers. Note that chips are easily crushed in a pack. Each packet weighs about 250 grams and sells for \$12 or so. Distributed by *Richards McCallum*.

### Cushy

Lightweight campers who can't get comfortable on a pile of spare clothes in a stuff sack might appreciate the decadence of *Freedom Camping's* compact, lightweight pillow filled with Dacron Hollofil polyester fibres. It measures 30 x 40 centimetres, is about half the thickness of a domestic pillow, will compress to a large handful, weighs 140 grams and sells for RRP \$14.95.

### Aqua pura

It seems clear that filtration and purification of water will become increasingly important, both in the bush and the city. Options at present range from powders and tablets to a variety of filters of varying effectiveness, some suited to rucksack use, others definitely not. One well-known portable model, long advertised in the pages of *Wild*, is the Swiss-made *Katadyn Pocket Filter*. If you've used a *Katadyn* filter with success in the wilds, you may be interested in a new unit for domestic use from the same maker. The *Chlorinex Filter System* purifies mains water by a two-stage process: an activated carbon element removes chemical impurities; and a ceramic filter removes bacteria. Both elements need replacement from time to time. The domestic unit represents a sizeable investment at RRP \$638, and the *Pocket Filter* a somewhat smaller one at around \$440—depending on currency fluctuations. Imported by *Sirmeta*.

A new portable filter made with the outdoorsperson in mind is the *MSR WaterWorks*. It draws water through a silicone hose by means of a hand-operated pump and emits it cleansed of all suspended particles, dissolved compounds and micro-organisms down to 0.1 microns, or one-tenth of a millimetre, in diameter. In practice, this means that everything except dissolved minerals and gases, and viruses, is removed. (If there is a risk of viral infection, water can be treated with iodine and then run through the filter to remove the taste.) Four filter elements of increasing fineness are used, the two coarsest being the easiest to clean; this helps to delay clogging of the two finest elements, a cartridge of activated carbon and a microporous-membrane filter, which are less easy to clean and moderately expensive to replace. The outlet of the *WaterWorks* can be screwed directly on to a wide-mouthed Nalgene water bottle or to an accessory known as a *Dromedary Bag*. This latter takes the useful features of a bladder from an empty wine cask and adds durable materials, the option of a convenient method of hanging, and a redesigned cap—and, naturally, costs more. There are *Dromedary Bags* in three sizes, of two, four and ten litre capacity; prices range from around \$25 to \$55. The



# 29th

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WaterWorks can also fill other vessels through an optional outlet hose. Devotees of MSR stoves will not be surprised to find that the WaterWorks is easy to dismantle and maintain and, with a little practice, simple to use. Its weight of around 600 grams (after use, with a little residual water; stuff sack included) is a sizeable addition to any rucksack, but compares favourably with competing filters. A price of around \$280 is a fair slug, too, but is

again competitive. It will probably be a long while before the average Australian bush-walker considers a filter of this kind worth while; amongst an expedition's gear or in a large group, however, it might be worth its weight in anti-diarrhoeals.

#### A cut above

The humble knife has come a long way at the hands of Japanese technocrats. Today, knives

are available in every conceivable shape and style. Many are designed for extremely specialized uses. *Hoffman Design's 911 Rescue knife* has a lockable, folding, fish-hook shaped blade (sharp on the inside curve) and a rounded, blunt tip. It is designed to cut rope, webbing and clothing against a person without the risk of inflicting injury in the process. It is, therefore, ideally suited to use in river rescue involving entanglement. Supplied in a Cordura pouch, this knife would be even more useful if it had a lanyard hole. Available from Zen Imports. RRP \$69. Another offering from Zen is the *Cold Steel Ready Edge knife*. In effect a mini sheath-knife, the Ready Edge has an extremely sharp, serrated, five

## TRIX

### Fire up

#### Lighting a fire in the wet, by Glenn van der Knijff

While in this day and age a camp fire is often frowned upon and a fuel stove is preferred for cooking, there are circumstances in which a fire is not such a bad thing. To light a fire in country where there is an abundant supply of dead, dry timber is easy—all too easy! It often requires only a bit of dry grass and a match to set a fire blazing. In the wet, however, dry timber and grass are usually impossible to find, and many good intentions of lighting a fire end in frustration.

Remember: never light a fire on extremely hot, windy or 'total fire ban' days, nor on peat soils: not only is it against the law, but fires have been known to smoulder underground for long periods before flaring up. Obey local regulations regarding positioning of fires; and always be careful. But don't let wet conditions defeat you. Instead, give this a go.

1 You'll need a lot of thin pieces of dead timber and/or bark. Search near trees and under leaf litter to find the driest pieces.

2 Do not attempt to build your fire directly on top of damp, bushy grass. Choose a clear area and make a good base for your fire. Be aware that steam will prevent a fire from burning efficiently so the place chosen needs to be as firm as possible.

3 Find two logs, approximately ten centimetres thick, and place them parallel and about 20 centimetres apart. On top, place the thin sticks and bark at right angles to the logs (see diagram). Make sure you have a ready supply of sticks and twigs of various sizes to refuel the fire as it ignites.

4 Underneath this set-up, and between the two logs, create a flame so that the heat generated will slowly (be patient!) dry the twigs above until they eventually ignite. You may need to use a small cloth soaked in fuel (methylated spirits

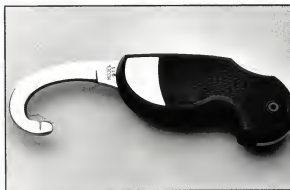
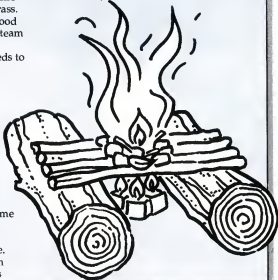
are safest), a fire-lighter, or some paper if you have any. Other fuels can also be used, but be extremely careful with volatile fuels such as Shellite.

5 Don't expect instant success. It may be some time before the twigs and bark are dry enough to burn. When they do, do not smother them, but gradually add more twigs. Sticks placed by the side of the small fire will dry speedily.

Eventually, the fire will crackle into life and grow to the point where you can place wet sticks and small branches on the flames without dousing the fire.

In an emergency, the time taken to get a fire blazing is probably better spent pitching tents, getting cold people dry and into sleeping bags, and preparing hot drinks on a stove. On a run-of-the-mill damp, cold day, however, a camp fire can be great for morale. To be ready when such a day arrives, practise this approach to lighting a fire in wet conditions in easier circumstances.

*Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section. Send your ideas to the address at the end of this department.*



Is Uri Geller designing knives these days? Hoffman Design 911 Rescue knife.

centimetre blade which locks into a hard-plastic sheath. The entire unit measures less than 13 centimetres and weighs only 35 grams. RRP \$34.

#### Alp Sports at the crossroads

The Alp Sports story is rivalled only by that of Mountain Designs (see Equipment, Wild no 42) as the adventure saga of the Australasian outdoor industry. Started by jet-setting Australian outdoor-equipment entrepreneur Jan Cameron 20 years ago, Alp Sports was sold four years ago, reputedly netting Cameron a not-so-small fortune. From there on it was downhill all the way for the chain of New Zealand specialist outdoor shops. The public company which bought Alp Sports went into receivership and Alp Sports was sold to New Zealand mountaineering identity Geoff Gabites. In the meantime Cameron and New Zealand business partner John Pawson had opened a succession of Kathmandu shops in Australia. When these spilled across the Tasman during 1991, it appeared to signal the end for the founding Alp Sports, which had been shipping water steadily since Cameron relinquished the helm. In December Alp Sports, then with nine shops in New Zealand, went into receivership, and in January it was announced that the stock, some of the remaining assets and the trade mark of Alp Sports had been sold to Kathmandu—presumably, at a 'fire sale' price! ■

New products (on loan to Wild) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Pahrn, Victoria 3181.



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# BUSH HISTORY

New books from Victoria and New South Wales

## The Scroggin Eaters: A History of Bushwalking in Victoria to 1989

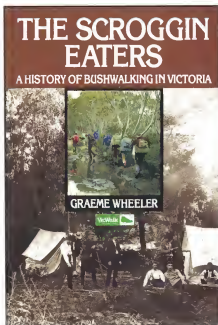
by Graeme Wheeler (Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, 1991, RRP \$29.95).

At the outset it must be made clear that, despite its subtitle, this is *not* a history of bushwalking in Victoria. Rather, it is a history of the publisher, the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs. If you're looking for detailed chapters on the pioneering of Victoria's forests and alpine areas, profiles of the earliest walkers and comprehensive information on their equipment, background and so on, you are more likely to find it in Harry Stephenson's excellent books reviewed in past issues of *Wild*.

What, then, does *The Scroggin Eaters* cover? The main thrust of the early chapters is to trace the origins of the first walking clubs in Victoria. The entire book is illustrated with many interesting contemporary photos reproduced in black and white, and this section contains a number of fascinating snippets of general walking history—but not enough. The origins of the Federation itself are described in a chapter headed 'Gleam of Vision'. Four chapters are then devoted to the rather dry internal workings of this organization. After an all too brief chapter on the development of mapping, following chapters are devoted to the Federation's activities in such fields as the establishment of the Alpine Walking Track, building the Federation Hut on Mt Feathertop, conservation, and the Bushwalking and Mountaineering Training Advisory Board. There follows a wad on major searches (many of them not involving lost bushwalkers) and a final chapter giving details of the member clubs (much of which is repeated in an appendix). Other appendices list the purposes and benefits of the Federation, its office bearers and representatives, its track-clearing exercises, searches, search practices, Federation walks—and, finally, abbreviations.

Wheeler is clearly a skilled writer with love and knowledge of his subject. At times the true historian in him emerges—resulting in the drawing of conclusions and the identification of trends rather than the mere reporting of events. Some of the early chapters are particularly interesting. I suspect, however, that Wheeler was given an impossible task: to produce mutton for the satisfaction of a core of Federation activists, dress it up as lamb for consumption by the general walking public, and serve both on the same plate. He may have succeeded in the first task. Public reception will decide the second. There is value in this detailed and thoroughly researched work, but one thing is certain: a comprehensive history of bushwalking in Victoria is yet to be written.

Cris Baxter



Scenes from Victorian bushwalking then and now: the cover of *The Scroggin Eaters*.

## The Barefoot Bush Walker

by Dorothy Butler  
(ABC Enterprises, 1991, RRP \$24.95).

Dot Butler—as Dorothy Butler is better known—winner of the Australian Geographic Society's Gold Medallion as Adventurer of the Year in 1988, shares the highlights of her remarkable life in this captivating and inspiring autobiography.

From her childhood days, Dot has had a strength of will, outstanding physical ability, a desire for adventure and a strong sense of survival: qualities that have led her to explore many parts of the world, on foot (often barefoot) and by bicycle. Not even a husband and four children could dampen her enthusiasm for bushwalking, rockclimbing, mountaineering and cycling! Indeed, her young children accompanied her on many of her exploits. They accordingly developed a love for the adventurous life where risk was to be accepted as an important 'part of these priceless experiences so refreshing in a world of artificiality'.

In 1980, on her 70th birthday, the Sydney Bush Walkers celebrated Dot's 50 years of active membership. In the early 1930s she became one of a dozen or so high-speed walkers (only two of whom were women) known as the Tigers. Her recollections of weekends devoted to track-making and mapping in the Blue Mountains, cutting her bushwalking teeth by walking enormous

distances in just two days, make fascinating reading. A lack of strict sequence to her anecdotes, however, makes it disappointingly difficult for the reader to piece together the whole picture.

Long before conservation had become an everyday word, Dot was active in the field, campaigning against the destruction of the world's wilderness. She was instrumental in the creation of a number of Australia's National Parks. Her deepest regret is that her six grandchildren and their generation will not be able to experience adventure as she has. She claims that 'we have done sad things to our once beautiful world' and urges us to try to remedy the damage done to our wilderness areas and work towards 'preservation at all costs'.

Sue Baxter

## The Outdoor Companion

by Quentin and Jonathan Chester  
(Simon & Schuster, 1991, RRP \$19.95).

*The Outdoor Companion*, a 'Young Pretender' to the crown long worn by Paddy Pallin's *Bushwalking and Camping*, begins well. In the first of its three major sections, headed 'Outdoor skills and essentials', the reader is taken with admirable economy through all the stages of a trip into the bush. There is advice to get even the total beginner going, and consideration of the things that seem to matter most once one is away from civilization: food; shelter; the weather; having fun; avoiding geographic embarrassment; and staying healthy. There's a lot to get through; the pace rattles along and much is consciously simplified. Hence, it's a pleasant surprise to be reminded often of the sense of calm and well-being the bush can engender—even when busy organizing the outdoor kitchen. 'Why we do it' is not forgotten.

Part two, 'Outdoor activities', begins with a concise look at some of the particular elements of bushwalking and cross-country skiing. These chapters will inform and encourage beginners—and those who have already begun, and wish to continue—in either activity.

The two chapters that follow, one on climbing and mountaineering, the other on trekking, are not up to the same standard. Each topic deserves a book of its own, and the attempt to condense is made in what sometimes seems an arbitrary and confusing manner. In particular, specialized terminology goes unexplained: what is the novice to make, for example, of the idea that 'dead men' can be relied upon for protection when climbing ice and snow, or that 'mantle shelving' can afford progress up a rockclimb? The glossary at the end of the book attempts to redress the situation, but, for me, it comes much too late.



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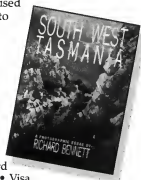
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Sad to say, you'd be better off skipping those two chapters, going straight to the bibliography which follows the glossary and looking up a really good book on climbing or trekking, such as the huge *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* or the specialized *Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya*. Part two ends with chapters on other means of locomotion in the outdoors and on outings with children; both are worth reading.

Part three, 'Outdoor equipment', is the longest section by a good margin. The authors set out here to supersede earlier publications which dwell on the value of gear that is itself now superseded—and, in some ways, they succeed. They give good reasons why modern, high-tech outdoor gear has replaced much of the stuff of old, and help the reader to decide which of it he or she may need. At times, they identify alternatives to expensive, new equipment; and a high price tag is never valued above simple design, durable materials and good workmanship. Yet many phrases in this section could have come from a glossy North American catalogue; brand names and jargon are sometimes made to stand in for words; and the plain message is that the reputable outdoor retailer knows best—all of which some readers may well find disappointing if not offensive.

There are things all through this book that are good, especially for the bushwalker and cross-country skier, but there are also plenty that are not. After a promising beginning, it becomes a bit of a bore—and sometimes worse. In its present form, *The Outdoor Companion* is unlikely to emulate the many printings and classic status of its illustrious forebear.

Nick Tapp

## South West Tasmania—A Photographic Essay

by Richard Bennett

(published by the author, 1991, RRP \$34.95).

Not another large-format photo book on Tasmania's wilderness areas! There have been so many in recent years that even the keenest collectors are becoming selective. Refreshingly, Richard Bennett presents a new approach to this wild region.

The book is dedicated to the late Deny King, who has written an eloquent foreword highlighting many of the region's special qualities. There is no extended text, a departure from the publications of recent years. Instead, pictures and lengthy captions effectively tell the story.

Rather than compete with the masters of landscape photography, Bell and Dombrowski, Bennett reveals the more human face of the South-west. His work is reminiscent of David Nielson's classic book *South West Tasmania: A Land of the Wild* (Rigby, 1975). Man, on both land and sea, features in many of the photos, and residents of the region are duly acknowledged with the inclusion of the Maatsuyker Lighthouse and Melaleuca tin miners. It is this coverage of the human element that will make this book so interesting to those who know the region.

Bushwalkers feature prominently, with some excellent creek crossings depicted. The bleaker aspects of a blizzard in the Eastern Arthurs will be of interest to anyone who has

experienced the region's fickle elements. The shots of boats and seafarers, South-west Tasmania's other main visitor group, are exceptional and show why Bennett has become known for his coverage of yacht races.

A photographic essay finally depends on the standard of photography. Exhibited it is high: stock shots of the region all exhibit good lighting which highlights features well. Many are aerials and some of these are superb, in particular the winter pictures of the Arthur Ranges.

There are, however, a few gremlins in the wilderness pictures. A few plates exhibit very flat lighting and have little impact. Although they were doubtless chosen deliberately—dull, bleak weather is common—they come off second best when compared with the other excellent work. Some duplication is apparent as well, with the most obvious being the tree depicted on pages 86 and 87. Despite these small faults Bennett has successfully depicted the South-west in many of its moods. In particular, his portrayal of man in the environment should be of interest to every bushwalker.

John Chapman FAPS, ARPS, AFIAP

## Kosciusko—The Mountain in History

by Alan Andrews

(Tabletop Press, 1991, RRP \$39.95).

Count Paul de Strzelecki, when describing how he came to name Australia's highest mountain, wrote:

The particular configuration of this eminence struck me so forcibly, by the similarity it bears to a tumulus elevated in Krakow over the tomb of the patriot Kosciuszko, that, although in a foreign country, on foreign ground, but amongst a free people, who appreciate freedom and its votaries, I could not refrain from giving it the name of Mt Kosciuszko.

A photograph of that tumulus is shown in Alan Andrews's survey of the history of the mountain. It was the first time I had seen it, and there is indeed a striking similarity to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko.

Strzelecki (who himself had a name difficult to spell) added to the confusion in spelling the name of our highest peak: although the patriot was called 'Tadeusz Kosciuszko', the Count omitted the 'z', and to this day it does not appear in the name of the mountain.

Andrews recounts the efforts and controversies of 19th century European explorers in their travels to the roof of Australia. He tells these tales thoroughly and well, and bushwalkers in particular will find their enjoyment enhanced by these stories of the mountain's history.

There are important omissions in this book given the broad sweep of its title. There is almost no reference to Aboriginal knowledge of the area, and there is almost nothing of the 20th century experience of Kosciuszko, much of which has had compelling drama of its own. Klaus Huenek's book *Kiandra to Kosciuszko* (also published by Tabletop—see the review in *Wild* no 26) concentrates on the 20th century experience of the Snowies, and in this complements Alan Andrews's book.

I would have appreciated a less academic and more accessible presentation: is there any

reason for labelling photographs as numbered 'plates' other than to add an aura of academic respectability (and, for the average reader, dullness)?

And a few other details might have completed the picture: a brief pen portrait of the Polish patriot would satisfy curiosity, and the description of the construction of the Krakow tumulus deserves to be in the body of the book, not tucked away in a note at the back.



The tumulus over the tomb of the patriot Kosciuszko, near Krakow, Poland, that gave Mt Kosciuszko its name. Photo by H Hermanowicz, reproduced from *Kosciuszko—The Mountain in History*.

But the joy of *The Mountain in History* is the way it recreates the journeys and experiences of early European explorers in the unique high country of the Main Range massif.

Brian Walters

## The Blue Mountains Guide Book

by Lincoln Hall and Barbara Scanlan

(Condwana Publishing, 1991, RRP \$14.95).

This handy guidebook to the region closest to the hearts of most Sydney bushwalkers will find its way into many day packs and car glove boxes. It is small in format but its 280 pages are packed with very useful information which will suit both residents and visitors. After a short introductory section the bulk of the book is a town-by-town description of scenic drives and day walks followed by listings of services such as restaurants, liquor stores, accommodation, petrol stations, museums and galleries, and take-away food outlets. Telephone numbers, opening hours and, where appropriate, approximate costs are given.

The descriptions of the walks are adequate but the number of walks described is by no means comprehensive. Some impressive scenic features such as the Grose Look-out at the end of Faulconbridge's Grose Road are not described. The most disappointing feature of this guide are the maps: those that are present are not very clear and appear to have been drawn in haste.

David Noble

## Antarctica and Back in Sixty Days

by Tim Bowden

(ABC Enterprises, 1991, RRP \$19.95).

I love this book. It is witty, honest and revealing.

Antarctica has an unusual place in the history of mankind, forming, as it has, a



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sometimes bizarre stage for the human drama. At the turn of the century it was the high drama of Victorian times. Between the 1930s and the 1980s Antarctica was the domain of scientific exploration. In recent times it has become an environmental battleground. And now the stage is being reset once again as the frontier opens to tourism. For example, do you know that you can fly to the South Pole if you have a spare \$50 000?

You may well be familiar with Tim Bowden's wit through his ABC Television programme 'Backchat', or with his literary skills through the book *One Crowded Hour*. In *Antarctica and Back in Sixty Days* he depicts an era that may well be passing. The book describes a voyage on board the ship *Icebird*, which resupplies Australian Antarctic bases every summer. So in one sense this is a contemporary view of Australian government involvement in Antarctica. It is also a book of hilarious home truths about what it is really like to be bottled up at sea with a blend of scientists, polities, philosophers, seamen and bureaucrats.

Then, at journey's end, comes the overwhelming beauty of the great, white, south land, where natural beauty lapses over from the frivolities of man. Tim has been smitten by the place and it shows in his writing. He knows the best moment to ask a poignant question and cleverly uses transcripts of interviews with returning 'expeditioners' to catch the elusive moods of Antarctica.

But this is not just for Antarctic buffs. For anyone who has felt the pangs of regret on driving back into the grimy outskirts of our huge cities after a few days of bliss in the outdoors—there are some words for you in this book.

Go out and buy it. It will crack you up.

Greg Mortimer

## Key Guide to Australian Mammals

by Leonard Cronin

(Reed Books, 1991, RRP \$19.95).

The combination of portability, clear colour illustrations, and informative descriptions of our native mammals makes this a valuable companion for all those interested in our native wildlife. As with *Key Guide to Australian Wildflowers* (see the review in *Wild* no 30), this volume is designed for easy identification. A simple visual key directs the user to specific pages where each animal is described and illustrated. Comprehensive indexes of both common and scientific names, distribution maps, and a list of suggestions for further reading are also included—all good practical stuff.

SB

## The Centre—The Natural History of Australia's Desert Regions

by Penny van Oosterzee

(Reed Books, 1991, RRP \$39.95).

In the last decade our understanding of how the Australian deserts work has been revolutionized. On our old, weathered continent with its desperately poor soils an ecology has developed quite different from any other desert in the world—an ecology ruled by termites, ants and lizards, in which mammals are confined to pockets of richer soil along the watercourses.

This is the first book to present the story for popular consumption and should be read by anyone who loves the outback and wishes to understand it. The book is nothing if not approachable. No chapter is longer than four pages, with boxes illuminating the main points and a compelling standard of photography of a type we have come to expect from Reg Morrison. Like *Wild*, one can pick the book up and start reading anywhere. Though perhaps a little over-designed for my taste, it nevertheless deserved to win the Eureka Prize for Science Books.

Stephen Garnett

## The Conservation Atlas of Tropical Forests: Asia and the Pacific

by Mark Collins, Jeffrey Sayer and Timothy Whitmore

(BP, MacMillan, IUCN and World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 1991, RRP \$189).

If the greenhouse issue has done anything, it has given debates on conservation an international perspective. Thus the battle for the Franklin in the early 1980s is likely to become the battle for the forests of South-east Asia in the 1990s. Vital to any conservation measures is authoritative information and this book provides it for the tropical forests in South-east Asia. Importantly, it considers not just the vegetative communities themselves and their animal inhabitants but the people who live in and with them as well as the economies of those countries forced to exploit their forests.

Australia, included briefly for our remnant forests in Queensland, gets a good report. But then, the ultimate tone of the book is surprisingly optimistic, claiming that if there is action soon it will still be possible to conserve the biodiversity of South-east Asian forests.

SG

## The Sierra Club Guide to Sketching in Nature

by Cathy Johnson

(Sierra Club Books, 1990, RRP \$27.95).

This sort of book would have been irrelevant a century ago when every educated person was taught how to draw and used that skill to record encounters with nature. Some simply sketched for pleasure, but many used their sketches to help them as amateur or professional field naturalists. Today, however, the art of sketching, especially for those who have no great pretensions in the art world, has rather fallen by the wayside.

This book by Cathy Johnson should go some way to remedying that situation. First, it is not a book purely for the specialist or artist. The great thing about it is that Johnson has managed to organize her material so that anyone, from rank amateur to professional artist, can get something from it.

Secondly, Johnson has been able to avoid the all too common, anti-creative, 'how to' approach and to use instead an undogmatic and flexible one which doesn't compromise aims or techniques.

For Johnson, sketching isn't just a means of recording what is 'out there' but is 'a means of opening a door to a different way of seeing'. For her there are wider implications in the

humble act of sketching; it is a means of learning from and heightening one's experience of nature.

Apart from the high level of enthusiasm which permeates the book, Johnson has managed to put together practical information on materials and techniques in the form of open-ended suggestions rather than hard and fast rules. Perhaps two-thirds of the book is taken up with this kind of basic, sound advice delivered in a tone that encourages users to find their own particular levels.

The final third of the book is devoted to ways in which to approach specific subjects, such as landscapes, trees and animals, and although her examples are all North American, the principles and techniques of drawing she employs hold good anywhere.

The book would benefit anyone from the anxious beginner to the experienced field naturalist or artist. It cleverly combines information, technical advice and a genuine love of the subject in a way which can only bring out the best in its readers—and, ultimately, its readers' sketches.

Paul Baxter

## Australian Rainforest Plants III

by Nan and Hugh Nicholson

(published by the authors, 1991, RRP \$12.95).

Over the years the Nicholsons' contribution to the rehabilitation of rain forests has been considerable; this is their third book on rain-forest plants and their cultivation. It is an affectionate treatment, with each short text being matched by a photographic portrait. By the look of the photos, the Nicholsons had a lovely time collecting the plants from rain forests as far apart as the Kimberley and Lord Howe Island. Although it would take some 500 volumes to cover all the rain-forest plants in the sort of detail they enjoy here, this book is an excellent start if you are thinking of growing your own rain forest in the back yard. Unfortunately, the only nursery selling the plants is likely to be the Nicholsons' at Channon in New South Wales. Once armed with the right permits, you might be better off collecting your own propagating material—it would certainly take you to some interesting places.

SG

## Other titles received

### Bicycling Around Victoria

by Ray Peace (Lothian, 1991, RRP \$19.95).

### Cycling the Bush: 100 Rides in NSW

by Sven Klinge

(Hill of Content, 1991, RRP \$17.95).

### Micronesia—A Travel Survival Kit

by Glenda Bendure and Ned Friary (Lonely Planet, second edition 1991, RRP \$16.95).

### Quest for Adventure

by Chris Bonington (Hodder & Stoughton, paperback edition 1992, RRP \$29.95).

### The Blind Probe: Cartoons by Foxy

by Alan Fox (Cordee, 1991).

### Vanuatu—A Travel Survival Kit

by David Harcombe

(Lonely Planet, 1991, RRP \$16.95).

### Yemen—A Travel Survival Kit

by Pertti Hämmäläinen (Lonely Planet, second edition 1991, RRP \$15.95).

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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# FEDERATION PEAK

Readers give *their* experiences

As a member of the first Tasmanian party to climb Federation Peak, the first woman to do so and, among other early trips in the area, a member of the group of four who tried the Northern Lakes approach, returning by the South Picton lead which we named Wilsmicro, it would be appreciated if we had names. The feature on Federation Peak in *Wild* no 43 names many people but we appear to be the 'nameless'.

When we climbed the peak (21 October 1949) I was with my husband, David Wilson (who has been walking in Tasmania and world-wide for the past 60 years), and Keith Lancaster (who has probably covered more of Tasmania than any other walker). Keith actually climbed solo in a snow storm. David and I had a few more days and waited hoping for better weather, but we had rain.

The friends with whom we tried the Northern Lakes route were Ron Smith and Peter Croft. It was not so much the scrub which defeated us as time. Time was very much against the early groups—the walking distance was greater and our holidays were very limited...

The following are the names of the first 13 people to climb Federation Peak: John Béchervaise, Bill and Fred Elliott and Allan Rogers, 28 January 1949; Keith Lancaster, 19 October 1949; David and Nancy Wilson, 21 October 1949; Bill Bewsher, Bob Summers, John Vidulich, Shirley Ward, Brian Wells and Pat Weston, 7 January 1950.

Nancy Wilson  
Rosny Park, Tas

Thank you from (I'm sure) not only myself but many readers for the special *Wild* feature on Federation Peak.

John Béchervaise's account of the first ascent gave fascinating insight into a real pioneering effort. The intimacy of the 40-year-old photographs also provided a special dimension. Having been to this wild place three times...I feel quite humble in the footsteps of these and other pioneers; in Béchervaise's words 'thrusting and cutting a path' up what is now the Moss Ridge approach and finally succeeding in their goal to reach the summit.

Thanks also for John Chapman's, Louise Giffedder's and Bob Jones's contributions to a splendid feature. The graphic description of that epic climb 32 years ago up the sheer North-west Face, with an unplanned overnight bivouac perched more than 100 metres above the Blade Ridge, provided lively reading.

If readers return to the spectacular view of the North-west and West Faces (left and right, respectively) on page 38, and follow Bob

Jones's account on pages 46 and 47, they may trace the climb from where the Blade Ridge (in shade, lower left) joins the sun-drenched North-west Face proper, goes up to the grassy-ledged 'Bus Stop', on up the chimney to the difficult overhang, (then traverses delicately left under the overhang to the foot of a second chimney (invisible in the photo) Editor! (overnight bivouac), and up the final ramp leading to the summit.

Readers may also be interested to contrast the well-caught photo of the sharp Blade Ridge below Reg Williams, on page 47, with the 'side' view on page 38. Associating the story of the climb with the photographs provides a bonus.

Once again, thank you for this and other continually great reading in *Wild*.

Peter Edwards  
Lindisfarne, Tas

## Eco-terrorism

The tragic fire that destroyed Fitzgeralds Hut (Bogong High Plains, Victoria) should not be compounded by the current ill-conceived clamour from some quarters to rebuild it. I will miss its history and charm but these values cannot be reconstructed. All mountain huts are at high risk of destruction by fire; many have been destroyed and all are certain to go sooner or later.

Unfortunately, the President of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs appears to have missed Andrew Barnes's excellent article (*Wild* no 43) on the clutter of huts, signs and snow poles in the Alps. In a letter to the *Age* of 2 January, Keith Lierse argues that it is unsafe for people to rely on huts for shelter, but then suggests that Fitzgeralds Hut should be rebuilt!

In bad weather, huts may only be found with skilled navigation. Some people have died within metres of huts they could not see. Although maps currently show Fitzgeralds Hut, many huts shown on maps no longer exist or are inaccurately marked, such as the non-existent hut shown at Buckety Plain on the Bogong 1:100 000 map. Fitzgeralds Hut should not be rebuilt on the pretext of safety: only proper equipment and training can protect visitors to the Alps.

The High Plains are already cluttered with enough junk from graziers, the hydro-electricity scheme, ski resorts and land managers. A study is needed to identify those structures of historic and management value so the rest can be removed.

The calls to rebuild Fitzgeralds Hut are yet another example of why we bushwalkers and ski tourists must write to government ministers to protect our interests. We need to ensure our peak organizations, such as the Federation

of Victorian Walking Clubs, are effective, astute and working for our benefit.

On a related matter, it is fortunate for conservationists that the identity of those involved in the hut fire is known. Given the recent spate of articles in the *Sunday Age*, *Herald-Sun* and *Sunday Herald-Sun* implying that environment groups are involved in 'eco-terrorism', I am sure this would have been added to the list of unsubstantiated, exaggerated and mysterious incidents. Although the imputations are as ridiculous as claiming that automobile associations are engaged in vandalizing public transport, comments from both the timber industry and the Victoria Police 'Bush Alert' programme are reported in Melbourne papers...

Jamie Pittcock  
Kew, Vic

## Fuel to the flames

I read John Hillard's article (*Wild* no 42) on bushwalking stoves with a great deal of interest as I am always looking for new and lighter ways of cooking in the bush. The article caused me to think of a couple of points to bring to your attention.

John repeats what is almost an article of faith regarding gas canister stoves, such as the Gaz models—that they perform poorly in cold conditions. Until recently, I held similar views; although I must admit that my gas canister stove (an Optimus) performed well during many skiing trips. This view was rather bluntly challenged on a trip overseas a couple of months ago. We were at 4700 metres, in Kibo Hut on Mt Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), where I was intrigued to watch a party of five Italians proceed to cook a huge pot of pasta on a Gaz stove. Much to my surprise, it did the job very effectively, using a standard canister, despite the temperature being somewhere below freezing.

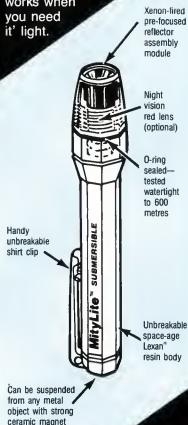
Admittedly, the high altitude helped by reducing the boiling point, but their dinner was hot! [High altitude helps by reducing the boiling point of the fuel, too. Just like the water in the pot, butane vaporizes more readily in the reduced air pressure at altitude. Editor!]

My second point is to express slight surprise at the omission of one very cost-effective stove currently on the market (in Western Australia at least). Made in the USA by the ZZ Corporation, the Sierra stove is very cleverly designed. It comprises a small electric fan underneath a double-skin bowl. Kindling and other wood chips are burnt in the bowl while the fan forces air through vents in the double skin. The result is a very hot little furnace which burns a small amount of wood very efficiently. We used one on a trip through Africa, cooking about half our meals on it for six weeks, using only two



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C-cell batteries. We never had to worry about fuel, nor were there any airport hassles about carrying hazardous materials. It was also a source of fascination to our African guides; they thought it was extraordinary. When conditions are very wet and wood won't burn, we've found that a Trangia burner sitting in the stove's bowl works quite well. The stove is light (400 grams) and compares well, cost-wise, with other stoves.

Assessed against the other stoves in John's article, the Sierra would have performed very well, especially on the annual load and annual fuel cost ratings. Environmentally, I guess it's mixed; yes, it does use wood, but only very small amounts compared with fires; on the other hand, it doesn't use fossil fuels. Well worth considering for those long trips in dry climates (but only where wood is available).

Julian Yates  
Cloverdale, WA

Shame on you, John Hillard...maligning my little friend the solid-fuel stove (*Wild* no 42) with comments such as 'useful as emergency equipment on day walks' and 'impracticable for use in cooking full meals'. Having spent many years in the army enjoying lightweight camping, becoming familiar with the solid-fuel stove and watching other campers suffer the agonies of liquid and gas stoves, I feel the following points should be brought to your readers' attention.

Solid fuel doesn't leak...Many of the stoves available are lightweight but require a lot of storage space in the rucksack. Conversely, solid-fuel stoves...are neat and tidy with a low profile...Finally, I don't know what bunyip has been whispering in John's ear, but these little stoves are as practical in cooking full meals as the liquid or gas stoves (*You must be joking!* Editor)...

Chris Dally  
Trott Park, SA

### Cold comfort

...I would like to voice my concerns about several statements [made in the survey of sleeping mats in *Wild* no 43]. Under the section on closed-cell foam the writer states that it '...can be anywhere from extremely comfortable (as snow or sand) to barely tolerable (on concrete) to sleep on'. Although we make closed-cell pads ourselves, I would debate the merits of steering consumers towards closed-cell pads with statements like 'extremely comfortable'. Also in question is the information earlier in the article that tells the reader the 'lightweight, compact versions' of self-inflating mats are 'less suitable for use in snow'. Standard laboratory testing and field testing would show that a 2.5 centimetre thick Ultra-Lite Therm-a-Rest can provide more insulation (and comfort) on the snow than a closed-cell pad. The melt-down test of two people in a tent on the snow, with one on closed-cell foam and one on a 2.5 centimetre Therm-a-Rest, will provide interesting results. Lift up the tent in the morning and note the variation in patterns in the snow.

Another concern I have is the closing statement of the article. It recommends that readers refer back to *Wild* no 27 because 'technicalities of sleeping-mat construction have not changed since...*Wild* no 27'. I wish

manufacturers had at least been given the courtesy of responding to a request for information before the recent article was published. The need to contact manufacturers seems crucial to having a factual and informative article. In light of the fact that the previous article had a chart of four companies making self-inflating mats and the recent article only has one of the original four still on the chart (Cascade Designs), a review of some of the technical details would have been of benefit to your readers. Not all the companies listed on the table in the Equipment Survey in *Wild* no 43 make the products in the way described in *Wild* no 27...

Jerry Lloyd  
Sales Manager  
Cascade Designs Inc  
Seattle, Washington  
USA

### Green and read

I would like to congratulate you on an informative, practical magazine. I find the magazine especially helpful in keeping up to date with what is happening in the 'green' area. The Green Pages are informative and stimulating; the suggested addresses are a great help when writing to state one's views. All too often I have found articles in other publications suggesting people write to voice their opinions but giving no address. The reader loses motivation and the letter is never written. Stimulating letters, including addresses, are also printed in your magazine. Keep it up.

Through reading a letter in a Wilderness Society newsletter, I was persuaded to put a 'No advertising material, please' sticker on my mail box. The junk mail received has gone from handfulls a day to perhaps one leaflet a week...The stickers do work; I urge everybody to use one on their mail box today to contribute to the reduction of our society's waste.

Penny Johanson  
Tamworth, NSW

In response to J Deering's letter in *Wild* no 40, I wish to initiate my subscription to your magazine (cheque enclosed).

How this person could judge a magazine like *Wild* to be 'greenie-biased' is beyond me—it's the last thing I would have expected.

As far as hunters, four-wheel-drivers, loggers and motor-bike riders are concerned, I agree that they do have a real and legitimate right to use the bush—as long as they don't kill animals, create erosion, cut down trees and pollute the atmosphere!

D A Tonks  
Logan Village, Qld

### Top gear

I read with amusement tinged with annoyance Peter Lee's letter in *Wildfire* *Wild* no 42.

Anyone who wants to camp using obsolete gear is more than welcome to, as it's good to see it being recycled. But give those of us who enjoy the pleasures that modern gear delivers some credit. Not all current developments in camping gear are offensive.

No one twisted my arm to buy a dome. After camping in various climates, altitudes and

latitudes all around the world for over 20 years in just about every type of tent available, I was so glad to have a tent that was self-supporting, that could be repositioned after erection and that also kept out insects. I wouldn't camp in alpine areas during summer, or in rain forest at any time, in a tent without a sewn-in floor and fly-screen on the entrances. I'd rather donate my blood to the Red Cross...

As for external H-frame packs, you can keep them. The first time I tried an internal-frame pack (in 1978) was a revelation. How comfortable and stable it felt after enduring assorted external-frame packs since 1967...

In 1973 I bought an impregnated japa rain jacket. Not only did it have a disturbing, unnatural smell, it also didn't breathe, and I got just as wet from condensation as I would've not wearing it...The thought of hiking in army boots is just too unpleasant to consider.

The only thing about which I can agree with Peter Lee is the use of wool—but even wool is better when used in conjunction with polypropylene undergarments to wick moisture away.

I'm very happy with the way technology has enhanced the wilderness experience by making it safer and more comfortable. I wonder how many people have been put off the wilderness because of unpleasant early experiences due to ill-designed gear. Through familiarity with the bush comes a commitment to the environment. Perhaps if more people's wilderness experiences were more enjoyable, there might be a greater public awareness of environmental issues.

Anthony Riddette  
Westmead, NSW

### Beating up the Drum

I must take issue with Matthew Forsyth's letter in *Wild* no 42 reporting the theft of ropes from Drum Cave. I have been caving at Bungonia (New South Wales) since 1969, and this hoary old chestnut was around then, too!

Anyone who had knowledge of caving at Bungonia would know that the number of people who just happen to walk past Drum with 60 metres of rope is negligible—and even then, the chance that someone calling from the bottom of the main pitch would be heard outside the cave is non-existent.

Certainly, equipment disappears from time to time, but this is usually the result of carelessness in the campsite or when travelling to the cave mouth. In 20 years of caving in southern NSW and elsewhere, I have never heard a verifiable story in which gear rigged on a pitch was removed.

This sort of story is part of the folklore of caving, but it must be accepted as a bush myth. I am a little disappointed that *Wild* has catered to the gullible fringe by publishing Mr Forsyth's letter without editorial comment. It really just encourages the naïve who wish to beat up an issue where none exists.

David Brown  
Calwell, ACT

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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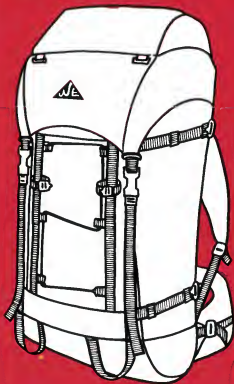
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# CHOOSING THE RIGHT SLEEPING BAG

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There are many different kinds of sleeping bags for campers to choose from. But having so many choices also causes confusion. So here are a few tips to help you.

## Your activity

The bag you buy should suit your personal needs as well as your outdoor environment. Consider the following:



### Caravan or car camping:

The weight of the sleeping bag isn't a major factor since you don't have to carry it,

so you can concentrate on warmth, comfort and leg-room.

### Bushwalking:

Weight and compactness are very important. You'll want a lightweight bag which can fit into - or on to - your pack without breaking your back and still keep you warm.

### Canoe camping:

Since you know you're going to be in a wet environment, a warm, moisture-resistant bag is what you'll need.

Remember, waterproof stuff sacks and travel bags can spring leaks.

### "Extreme" camping:

For those people who like to meet the elements head on - mountaineers, winter campers, etc - weight, warmth, compactness, and moisture resistance are critical considerations.

### Weight conditions

Always research where you're going. Find out what climate and weather to expect and, remember, always prepare for the worst.



### Wet:

If you camp where it will be wet, you need a bag that will continue to keep you

warm even if it gets wet.

### Cold:

When the temperature is likely to drop, you need a bag that can really do the job of keeping you warm and comfortable.

### Warm:

If you camp only in warm areas you'll probably want a thin, lightweight bag.

### Three-season use:

Many outdoor enthusiasts camp in the spring-summer-autumn seasons. This requires a versatile bag that can be unzipped for ventilation when it's hot out, but also has enough insulation to keep campers warm through late or early frost.

### Sleeping habits

Consider your own sleeping habits. Do you toss and turn? Or do you huddle under the covers even in summer? These are important considerations. Get in the bag, if the store lets you, to see if it fits, and if it's easy to manage the zippers and closures. A campsite miles from

civilisation is no place to discover that your sleeping bag is too small. But keep in mind that a sleeping bag that's too big means unnecessary weight and volume for you to carry.

### Bag shape

The shape you choose is decided both by where you're using the bag and your personal preference.

### Rectangular:

By far the most popular, these bags can be completely unzipped to be used as quilts for caravan or car camping. The shape provides lots of leg and hip room. However, because they are larger than some bags, they have more space to heat and tend to be heavier and bulkier.

### Barrel/tapered:

These are slightly tapered at the foot to decrease bulk and weight.

### Mummy:

Very tapered, with a hood, often used by bushwalkers, cold-weather campers and mountain climbers. Mummies give you only as much room as your body will fill. For that reason, they are more efficient than other designs: lighter, more compact, and warmer but a bit hard on the claustrophobic.

### Modified-mummies:

A compromise for people who feel too confined in true mummies. A modified mummy still offers a hood and increased thermal efficiency when compared to a rectangular bag, but provides more leg-room. The trade-off? A bit heavier and bulkier than a mummy.

### How a sleeping bag works

Sleeping bags are, first and foremost, heat savers. The body loses heat three ways and a good bag will slow loss from all three.

### Convection:

Heat loss by the movement of warm air away from the body via spontaneous air flow through openings in the bag and by air movement in large gaps between the body and the bag.

### Radiation:

Heat loss by radiant energy leaving the body and passing through the material of the bag.

### Conduction:

The transfer of body heat through the materials that make up the insulator and through still air.

A good sleeping bag reduces body heat losses from conduction, convection and radiation. Most of the radiant heat is absorbed by the inner lining and the insulating fibres in the filling material. Still air, trapped by the insulating fibres between the inner and outer linings, acts as an excellent insulator. Without the presence of good insulation, body heat will be lost through convection, conduction and radiation.



### Insulation

The type of insulation used is one of the most important ingredients in a sleeping bag. The more efficient the insulation, the more loft it will create to trap air.

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### Dacron® Hollofil®:

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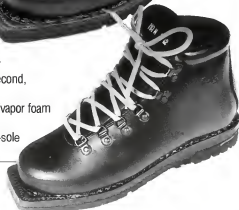
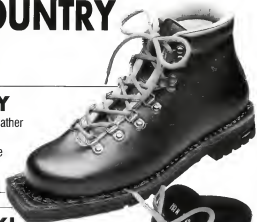
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Capacity: 75-85 litres

Back sizes: 2, 3, 4

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*Michael Hampton*

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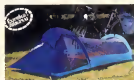
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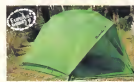
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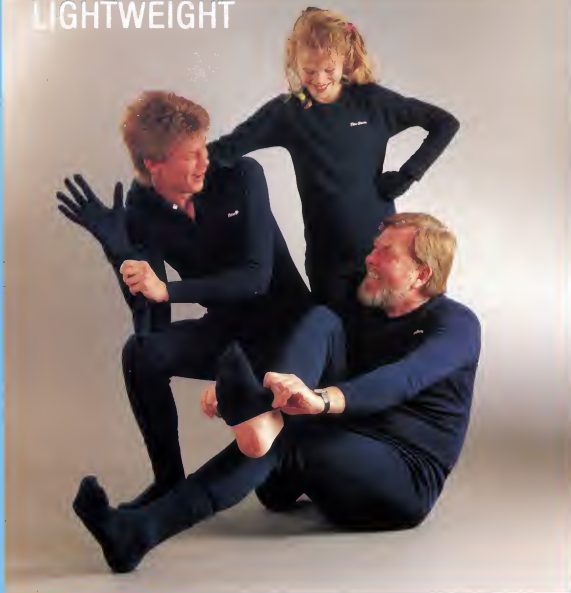
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